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GEORGE
BORROW

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GEORGE BORROW

SAMUEL MILTON ELAM

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES
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THIS BOOK IS FOR
MARK VAN DOREN

"Life is sweet, brother."

"Do you think so?"

"Think so! There's night and day, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon and stars, brother, all sweet things; there's likewise a wind on the heath. Life is very sweet, brother; who would wish to die?"

"I would wish to die — "

"You talk like a gorgio — which is the same as talking like a fool — were you a Rommany Chal you would talk wiser. Wish to die indeed! A Rommany Chal would wish to live for ever!"

"In sickness, Jasper?"

"There's the sun and stars, brother."

"In blindness, Jasper?"

"There's the wind on the heath, brother; if I could only feel that, I would gladly live for ever. Dosta, we'll now go to the tents and put on the gloves; and I'll try to make you feel what a sweet thing it is to be alive, brother!"

LAVENGRO — CH. XXV

INTRODUCTION

THE PROTAGONIST of Lavengro *himself partook of the natures of the two other principal characters in the book. These were the Gipsy and the Priest; Borrow was the Scholar.*

George Borrow was a scholar whose learning was neither academic nor profound. He was essentially a drifter: an ambitious drifter with a pronounced respect for the supernatural. As none of these qualities is easily compatible with the others, so it was that Borrow's private thoughts, of which he chose to divulge so little in his five quasi-autobiographical narratives, were constantly at war with themselves. A man mentally so conditioned could not but have been unhappy. This unhappiness disappeared before congenial work. Unfortunately, occupations were hardly procurable for one of Borrow's stamp.

It may be surmised that for a decade and a half George Henry Borrow was reasonably happy. This time includes the "seven veiled years" and the

duration of his employment by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The "seven veiled years" will probably remain so. There is evidence that Borrow was in France and Portugal, and there are rumours of his having been in Italy and elsewhere, but no reliable data are in existence to account completely for his whereabouts in this period. George Borrow preferred to be mysterious about these years. Therefore it is only possible to assume that he had found contentment in them, for he was ever one to extol the virtues of his own hardships, which, as he chronicled them, were numberless.

As an informal missionary for the Bible Society Borrow certainly did not find peace; yet in Spain he remembered his days in Russia as happy ones; and later in England he recalled the five years in Spain as the happiest of his life. (This without mention of the "veiled period," as his only references to this were inadvertent.) But in Russia Borrow and Mr. Lipovzoff, whose association was necessary to the work of the Bible Society, were frequently at odds; and in Spain Borrow and Lieutenant Graydon were continually brawling, so that, had they not been separate by distance as well as by temperament, there had been actual physical combat between them.

George Henry Borrow was born on the fifth of July 1803. He died on the twenty-sixth of July 1881.

A decade and a half of appreciable happiness in a life of eight decades is not at once understandable in a man who had fame thrust upon him while he was still young enough to enjoy it. It is first requisite to understand the man.

For George Borrow was a man. This was a fact which he never permitted himself to forget. His battle with the Flaming Tinman glorified Borrow in his own eyes. He was always eager and ready with his fists, and only his immense height prevented many a standing fight. Borrow stood six feet two inches in his stockings; in his shoes, it is clear that most seekers after trouble were not like to ask an argument of him.

But Borrow's manliness was not entirely physical. He was intolerant of politeness so called; on occasion he was inexcusably rude to persons who would have been his friends, and indeed to some persons who were his friends and continued to be so. Still, he was a dutiful son and a good husband, and a faithful friend so long as he was at all friendly. The conventional idea of manliness was a tax upon Borrow's nature. He was a thorough vagabond, and as a vagabond he was the gentlest of men.

Borrow frequently contemplated taking clerical orders. Had he possessed a roving commission as a minister — which was not practicable in the Established Church — it is likely that Borrow would have

brought untold other vagabonds into the true light. As it happened, he was never ordained; and even today it cannot be truthfully asserted that Borrow was a Christian. Perhaps he was. Perhaps he was not. He was unquestionably religious, but orthodoxy as professed in any Protestant Church is yet to be discovered in the beliefs of George Borrow. He emphasized his approval of the Church of England, and the Church of England, through its authorized spokesmen, more than once voiced its approval of George Borrow. The reason for this is not clear; Borrow was not precisely a defender of the faith. He was an individual apologist and at the same time vaguely militant.

There were, then, three quite different phases of George Borrow's life. Each of these phases was chronologically concurrent with the others, and Borrow himself was a literal triumvirate. He called himself a gipsy, and he really was a true vagabond; he called himself a philologist, and he really was a capable linguist; he called himself a Christian, and he really was a consistent deist. Stated thus baldly, these properties would seem to unite. In George Borrow, however, they did not unite; and thereby hangs a tale, not fiction, of comedy and tragedy, adventure and romance.

GEORGE BORROW

CHAPTER ONE

THERE WERE two children playing in a lane. The elder, a fair, pretty boy about six years old, was John Borrow. He romped about enthusiastically, taking a lively interest in his play.

The younger was little George Borrow. He was not at all like his brother John. Little George was not yet three years of age, but he sat on the ground as if he were a philosopher and passively watched his brother run gleefully round and round.

John was not old enough to take the baby's indifference for granted. He made faces for and at George to entertain or frighten him as he might. The smaller child looked dully on and said nothing. He had the use of his tongue; he had been known to make use of it amazingly, but this day he was reticent, as he commonly was. So presently John gave up the edification of his brother and took to chasing a hen clucking in the bushes beside the lane.

George, left to his own resources, did not lack for amusement. He scooped up a handful of sand

from the lane and let it trickle through his fingers. He picked up a dry twig and broke it: the twig was brittle and snapped easily.

But here was a new plaything. Here was a golden, glorious delight that lived and moved. It was unlike anything that George had formerly seen. The creature was long and slender; its enlarged head rose and lowered and its tiny tongue darted swiftly below its small, gleaming eyes.

The serpent glided slowly towards the child; and the child, fascinated but unafraid, crawled impulsively on hands and knees towards the serpent. They met. Little George Borrow grasped the yellow beauty about its middle and held it aloft. He was surprised to find the creature so cold. He would have dropped it, but it was so pretty, its movements were so graceful, that he called his brother instead.

" John," he said, " John, come look! "

John came running, the hen he had stalked clucking at his heels. " What is it? " he panted, and then stood still. The hen scampered desperately away, and John screamed: " O mother, mother! the viper! My brother has a viper in his hand! " He then made as if to wrest the serpent away from George, who still held his pretty plaything; but the viper, which had been indifferent to the baby's actions, spat at John and would have struck him.

Mrs. Borrow, who had been but a short distance away, now arrived. George released his captive before

his mother could reach him. The viper erected itself and hissed furiously and writhed away into the green, and George looked wonderingly after it until it had disappeared. Then he looked up to his mother and wondered at the horror in her eyes.

Mrs. Borrow loved her youngest child. After three years he was still a stranger to her, while John, although by no means a model son, did what was expected of him. Little was expected of George, but even that little seemed too much. Well, he was only an infant. George's mother led the infant home and told him about serpents.

So George learned that serpents were taboo. The information did not astonish him. Nearly everything he liked was taboo. But soon he would grow older; soon he would be big like John; then he would see. Meanwhile, he would keep away from serpents — but he would not forget the yellow beauty in the lane.

Presently George was six years old. He was larger also, and taller; and he was by now a great traveller. Thomas Borrow, George's father, was an officer in the King's army, and the regiment was seldom long in one place. George learned to know his country; but he seemed to be a dull boy; he seemed not to benefit by his knowledge.

Perhaps this was so. For at this time George renewed his acquaintance with serpents.

The regiment was stationed at Norman Cross;

and at Norman Cross George got to know a queer old man with a bag. There were vipers in this bag. It was some time before George learned about the vipers. The old man made his business appear to be more mysterious than it was. He was a catcher of snakes, and a herbalist besides; and about this latter occupation existed an air of dark secrecy that was quite like to check the curious. It was not until George discovered the old man in the process of securing a viper that they spoke.

After this the two were seen a great deal together, roaming the fields, plodding through the swamps. For the first time George's cheeks were rosy; his eyes lighted up intelligently when he was addressed. He had an interest in life. His parents were disturbed, yet they said nothing.

George thought that the old herbalist was fearless. He would pry into the most dangerous places while looking for his beloved snakes. Then one day he told George that he was afraid of something. The something was the king of the vipers.

" The king of the vipers! " said George.

Yes. One time the old man had waked out of a deep sleep to find a huge yellow and gold snake towering several feet above his head and looking down into his face. This reptile would have devoured him had not the report of a fowler's gun a little distance off frightened it away. The king of the vipers had been angry with the old man because the old man

meddled with the vipers. So now sometimes the herbalist thought twice before capturing a snake which he particularly fancied.

George pondered this carefully. He did not suspect the old man of falsehood. The vipers surely had a king, and just as surely this king was a hard monarch to deal with.

This did not prevent the boy from wandering through the fields alone. He hoped that one time he would meet with the king of the vipers. It would be an interesting situation.

After a time George's friend was seen no more about Norman Cross. The old man had caught his vipers and plucked his herbs, and he could not afford to remain for the sake of a child's companionship. But he loved the boy, and when he left, he gave to George a tame viper whose fangs had been extracted. A worthy present, one that young George appreciated. On his walks through the country he carried the reptile with him.

On one of these walks George found himself in a territory that he had not previously visited. A clump of great oaks had attracted him, and in the midst of these trees George discovered a gipsy camp. Before a small tent were an evil-looking man and woman. George came on. He knew nothing of gipsies and he was unperturbed.

The welcome he received was far from cordial — he was not welcomed at all. The boy then stepped

back. He held his peace and did not run. The man came forward, a ladle in his hand, and brandished it before the child.

"So I have caught you at last," said he; "I'll teach ye, you young highwayman, to come skulking about my properties!" The man concluded this speech with a menacing grin, in which his consort joined him.

The six-year-old urchin began promptly to argue with these swarthy people. He informed them that he was in the King's Lane, and that, so far as he knew, he had as much right there as they.

George was then accused of spying and threatened with drowning; he was by now thoroughly frightened; from bravado, and unaware of the effect it would have upon the gipsies, he referred to his viper as his father, and drew it from beneath his jacket where it had been concealed. The viper stared at the man with glittering eyes, and he faltered: "I say, wifelkin, did you ever see the like of this here?" But the woman had retreated to the tent.

Young Borrow recognized that he was master for the time. He made himself comfortable and acquainted himself properly with the strange couple. Their ideas were new to him. They were a superstitious people, as George determined from the respect they paid him and his viper; and when they had become more friendly, he informed them that his father was in the army and not a serpent in the least. The

three were at last on an identical social plane and there was an end of hypocrisy.

George was delighted with his surroundings. They were dirty; they were different from any he knew; they would not meet with his parents' approval. They were taboo. This did not matter; he did not know the word or its meaning; in fact the word was not current in the English language. He did know that his parents would disapprove his conduct, and he also knew that he was enjoying himself.

In the tent they sat, hypocrites the three of them, talking, joking, all true vagabonds, although little George Borrow had a long road to travel before he would be actually of them.

Another boy entered the tent. This boy was about thirteen years old, a swarthy, roguish fellow who looked contemptuously upon young George. This lad was Ambrose Smith — the Jasper Petulengro of *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye*. Even when he learned that George was a *sap-engro* — a charmer, a catcher, a tamer of snakes — he was none too generous with his esteem.

Presently the gipsies went away, and it was time for George to return home. But he stood gazing after them; he knew that they would meet again.

And Jasper Petulengro had called him "brother."

But George's mind was not permitted to dwell on these things. His father's duties kept him always on

the move, and George's twelfth year found him in Ireland.

He was by now mentally awakened, his brain was alert, he was athirst for knowledge. He pored over old books and pamphlets; if on occasion he found one printed in a language other than English, he pondered the strange words until he knew them, if not their meaning.

Although George had no use for school, he strove diligently with his studies. He disliked the stately scholastic atmosphere of the academy he attended; but the instructor was a man of much learning and a grateful humanity; and, also, George made friends at the school.

Among these friends was a tall, freckled lad of about sixteen, with grey eyes and outgrown trousers, named Murtagh. He was an absent-minded boy who gave small attention to his books. One day George came upon him seated at his bench manipulating his thumbs and forefingers as if to shuffle the air.

"Good day, Murtagh," said Borrow, "you do not seem to have much to do?"

"Faith, you may say that, Shorsha dear! — it is seldom much to do that I have."

"And what are you doing with your hands?"

"Faith, then, if I must tell you, I was e'en dealing with the cards."

"Do you play much at cards?"

"Sorra a game, Shorsha, have I played with the

cards since my uncle Phelim, the thief, stole away the ould pack, when he went to settle in the county Waterford! "

This statement of fact interested George. He had a deck of cards, for which he had no use, and he had discovered a way to dispose of them.

" I say, Murtagh! " interjected Borrow after the conversation had gone a little further, " I have a pack of cards."

" You don't say, Shorsha ma vourneen? — you don't say that you have cards fifty-two? "

" I do, though; and they are quite new — never once been used."

" And you'll be lending them to me, I'll warrant? "

" Don't think it! — But I'll sell them to you, joy, if you like."

" Hanam mon Dioul! am I not after telling you that I have no money at all? "

" But you have as good as money, to me, at least; and I'll take it in exchange."

" What's that, Shorsha dear? "

" Irish! "

" Irish? "

" Yes, you speak Irish; I heard you talking it the other day to the cripple. You shall teach me Irish."

" And is it a language-master you'd be making of me? "

" To be sure! — what better can you do? — it

would help you to pass your time at school. You can't learn Greek, so you must teach Irish! "

Murtagh, that astonished youth, did not know whether or not he had submitted to a good business transaction; but the wily George had no doubts whatever. The cards were useless — to him — and he hankered after the gift of tongues; and his learning of colloquial Irish was nothing other than a gift.

Yet the language was not all in Ireland that interested young George. In his spare hours he frequented the barrack stables of his father's regiment, hoping that one day he would learn how to ride.

The day was not long in coming. In the stables was a fine horse, a great Irish cob, a most gallant member of the species, which was accounted a hard animal to ride. George was standing without the stable door this morning, when a groom approached him and asked him to take the cob out for a breathing. George refused, knowing as he did the reputation of the horse.

But the groom explained that while the cob might prove hard to handle to a good horseman, once the boy was on its back and their nerves in tone, riding it would be easy.

George was half afraid; but he saw that he was not like to have an equal opportunity again. So he let the groom assist him to mount, and then, the reins in his hand, the cob trotted off, returning shortly to the groom, who encouraged young Borrow yet more

in his equestrian endeavour. This was all George required; he now gave the cob its head and they were off again, this time at a gallop; and they did not return for two hours. In that time George acquired a passion for horses that never left him; and between the cob and Murtagh his hours out of school were filled.

But George was not destined to remain in Ireland for ever. His father was once more compelled to move,[1] and yet once more, and presently George found himself in Norwich — the old Norwich of the old England. This was Captain Borrow's permanent home; that he did not live here permanently at times angered him. To George it mattered not at all. But he was happy to be in Norwich now. For one thing, Norwich was never dull, and for another, neither was George.

George was now fifteen years old. In mind and body he was a man. He had reached his full height, so that he stood well above his fellows. His hair was a deep black, but soon it would be grey. He was an imposing person, this lad, in appearance.

George had ceased to bother with serpents and books; he had put away childish things. That was why he had come to Norwich horse-fair, where were the finest horses bred.

[1] Captain Borrow was nominally adjutant; but frequently when his regiment was in camp, George's father was elsewhere seeking out recruits.

But at Norwich horse-fair there were excitements other than horses. Here gathered the " bruisers of England," boxers who would knock a man down for the glory of it and then suffer themselves to be knocked down to lend colour to the fray. Here were collected the sportsmen of Great Britain and the Continent, and the hangers-on of sportsmen. Also here were thieves who would lift a purse and then beg a shilling of the man they had robbed.

And here were gipsies: kidnappers and cut-throats all, said the people who followed the fair.

George investigated. He looked about him. Perhaps he would find one of the cut-throats he had used to know. He wandered indiscriminately through the crowd, paused here and there, walked on again. He was searching for something, somebody.

Meantime George had the curious sensation that he was being watched. He could not account for it. He peered into faces, glared at people, was glared at in return. What the devil? he thought. What the devil?

But it was not the Devil. It looked and acted like him, but it was Jasper Petulengro. George did not recognize the gipsy directly; but he knew Borrow, and it was he whose eyes had followed George. And George himself had peered about with the hope of just this occurrence. But now that he had found Jasper he did not know what to do with him. Jasper solved the problem; and the two walked together to a small valley where the gipsies were encamped.

They talked as they walked. It was a strange conversation, and indeed Jasper did most of the talking; but George was a good listener. Also, they were a strange pair.

Jasper Petulengro was not a handsome man. His eyes were dark and wild; his hair was dark and wild; his skin was dark and wild. He was not a meet companion for a youth on a holiday, and yet George was delighted. His blood was stirred.

At last they were come to the gipsy camp. There were several tents here; in front of one of them sat a mean-visaged old woman who did not offer George a glance, but entered discourse with Jasper. George could make nothing of her talk. This amused Jasper. But they left the woman, and the gipsy showed Borrow about the camp.

This visit was the first of many. Jasper Petulengro, whose father and mother were now in confinement for passing bad money, was a Romany *Kral* — a gipsy king — and his friendship for George gave the lad sufferance with the gipsies which he could not have otherwise had. And George, under Jasper's guidance, soon picked up the gipsy tongue, and earned for himself the name *Lavengro* — word-master — which he carried for the rest of his life. But it was not with languages that George was now concerned. He wanted to know men, people. And he had come to the right place. The English gipsies of the early nineteenth century were a people unlike any other people;

but inherent in them were the characteristics of races running back to the beginning of time, so that, although they were despised generally — were, in truth, generally despicable — their humanity was genuine. They were not civilized, neither were they sophisticated: their very naïveté, therefore, supplied George Borrow, young as he was and untutored as he was supposed to be, with the material he desired.

One of these gipsies taught George how to box. This boxer was Tawno Chikno. Tawno Chikno did not look like a fighter. He was a beautiful man. He was the only beautiful man George ever saw. Tawno Chikno was a sheik before sheiks got to be popular. He could have had any woman in Norwich, Jasper used to tell George. But Tawno Chikno was a gipsy and he remained with his people.

It was an honour to learn boxing from this big fellow. George had a good long reach, his arms were nearly as long as Tawno Chikno's; and many was the time George tried to shatter the gipsy's handsome nose with a swift left from the shoulder. Tawno Chikno encouraged his pupil in these efforts; but they remained efforts only and Tawno Chikno retained his beauty. That was all right with Borrow: the youth's wish was knowledge that he might later put to good use. Really, he did later put his boxing-lessons to good use.

And Jasper taught George a lot of things. Jasper gave George his philosophy of life. Hitherto George

had frequently contemplated the futility of existence. He had been bothered by the sudden emergence of thoughts — " why-thoughts " he considered them — that vitiated him and robbed life of its reasonableness. Jasper changed this; it was a morbid outlook for a young man.

Through Jasper, George acquired a material philosophy; and through his contact with the gipsies as representative of people in general, he learned that most people were entirely physical. So that George himself became physical, and he threw himself into life with a vigour that amazed his instructor. Jasper found nothing dull in Lavengro.

And after this, Lavengro found nothing dull in life. " Life is sweet," he said to himself, unconsciously anticipating Jasper Petulengro's later phraseology.

Their rides to the villages surrounding Norwich were among the sweetest things of life. George was already a very good horseman; soon he became a better. Jasper was a trader of horses in addition to his other businesses, and he and George never lacked for a good mount.

Together they would ride to fairs and markets. Occasionally they would halt, perspiring, at an inn; Jasper and young Lavengro were bibacious fellows. A strong shot of ale was always well met; they did not get drunk, but they slaked their thirst and again went their way. Lavengro was never content without

his ale, Jasper was never content with it, but they were most excellent drinkers.

So the days passed swiftly. Idler though George was, he managed to do a great deal in these days; nothing on which to pride himself; he accumulated no tangible riches. But he was young; he was building his character; there was by now much strength in it, not, perhaps, according to conventional standards, yet it possessed a satisfactory elasticity so that what he desired to do might be done without extreme qualms of conscience. Thus George was educated to the making of bargains. While his love for horses was acquired, he could appraise them almost instinctively, and he and Jasper found fun as well as profit in trade. It tickled their souls to swap a decrepit nag for a young filly.

But it was among the gipsies that George Borrow made his greatest error in the appraisal of human values. He was young at this time, and impressionable. He had a good mind, but it was plastic, as all good minds are. So he came to look upon the gipsies as a superior people, and at that time he was unable to distinguish their faults.

Now the one great fault of a gipsy — a gipsy's most evident deviation from the normal — is his disregard for the truth. So that Lavengro, through precept and example, came in the course of time to look upon the truth as an eccentricity. He so completely identified himself with lies and gipsies that in after

time he often wondered whether or not he himself was a gipsy — and yet in practice he was a thorough Englishman, and in fact his mother was of Huguenot extraction and his father was a Cornishman. So that Borrow was none of the things he fancied himself to be. And yet, paradoxically, he was everything he fancied himself to be.

At this time, when Borrow was associated with the gipsies — with Jasper Petulengro especially — George fancied himself to be a god. Not a deity: he did not suffer from mania in any sense. His belief was that he and Jasper were young gods, and, considering their material independence, they were.

Petulengro was married, but he did not permit his wife to interfere with him.

Borrow was not of age, but he did not permit his parents to interfere with him.

Jasper's wife's mother was a Mrs. Herne, a terrifying old virago who had no use for George. He had, as openly as he might, shown that he had no manner of use for her; and she on her own behalf ignored him, thus concealing her hatred of him. But one day George, being in one of his godlike moods, and apropos of the contrast between the old she-devil and her pleasant son-in-law, said to Petulengro: "What do you call God, Jasper?"

Petulengro studied Lavengro's face. This question had not been put to him before; but it had a meaning; surely it had a meaning.

After some thought, Jasper replied: "I call God *Duvel*,[2] brother." And still he studied Borrow's face.

Borrow's face was a study. *Duvel*, eh? He calls God *Duvel*, does he? The gipsy word for God is *Duvel*, is it?

George stroked his chin. "It sounds very like *devil*," he said.

"It doth, brother, it doth."

"And what do you call divine, I mean godly?"

"Oh! I call that *duvelskoe*."

"I am thinking of something, Jasper."

"What are you thinking of, brother?"

"Would it not be a rum thing if divine and devilish were originally one and the same word?" laughed George. And Jasper laughed also, and they drank upon it.

And presently the gipsies were gone from Norwich, and Lavengro must make other associations.

[2] It is interesting to note that Borrow does not list this word in the vocabulary of the *Romano Lavo-lil*.

CHAPTER TWO

IN THE YEAR 1820 Captain Borrow, who was no longer in active service, was mightily pleased with himself. His son John, in whom his fondest hopes were centred, was studying art; and George himself, whose hopes, it seemed, did not exist, was articled to a firm of lawyers. Captain Borrow had perceived that George gave little heed to law, but at any rate the boy was kept busy.

George busied himself mainly with languages. What time he did not employ in the study of tongues he gave over to people with ideas similar to his own, when he was able to discover them.

Now, in those days there lived in Norwich a man named Taylor, a scholar, called " Godless Billy." This man was, in his own words, an enemy of humbug. So that, both he and Borrow being in Norwich, it was inevitable they should meet. They did meet, through the good offices of a Jew named Levy, who had been giving George lessons in Hebrew.

Like Jasper Petulengro, William Taylor was not

a meet companion for a youth on a holiday. For, whatever ideals George Borrow may have originally had, Godless Billy seems to have destroyed them; but in the destruction he left George with an open mind and an appreciation of ideas with which he did not necessarily agree.

Borrow was only one of the Norwich young men whose spiritual welfare Taylor supervised. But George was a great favourite with the old radical, for by this time people had stopped saying that he was a dull boy, and Taylor himself had observed George's particular brilliance. So that early in life George was brought into the true light.

The boy himself was unaware of his conversion. He always had had " doubts." It did not then or at any other time strike him as odd that his doubts were variable and consistent only in the fact of their being. It so happened that his congenital superstition delighted in suppression; and it followed that Taylor found in Borrow a willing but unknowing convert.

It will be seen that the true light of William Taylor of Norwich was not that of the Roman Church, nor that of the Church of England, nor that of the Dissenters. The true light was not faith, but the denial of faith.

Well, young George denied it frequently enough. And of course he knew what he was doing. He was melancholy by nature, and the good Taylor's doctrines increased Borrow's melancholy. George did not

mind. He was too enthusiastic about his preceptor to mind. . . .

Now, a drinker may be a solitary fellow with no regard at all for the etiquette of convivials; or he may be a convivial; or he may drink because it seems the proper thing to do. A man with the desire or ability to drink at any time in any place is seldom encountered; and when he is encountered, it is at once assumed that he drinks because it is the proper thing to do; not, however, from any reflection that if he does not, he will be thought eccentric, but rather from a cultured appreciation of liquor.

Borrow was a drinker in a legitimate and certainly not disparaging sense. And Godless Billy had been known to take a drink.

But Borrow and Taylor were not alone in their winebibbing. Taylor was no longer a young man, so that his intercourse with Borrow was in the main superficial, even when their talk was confined to intellectual matters. There were other young men with them.

Norwich was not a proper stamping-ground for this crew. The attitude of the townspeople was provincial. To see young Borrow strolling down the streets of the city, his melancholy drowned in wine, outraged their sensibilities, and — perhaps — made them the least bit jealous.

Borrow's father, who was a narrow man, and of course a good man, could not understand his son.

And Lavengro made no attempt whatever to understand his father. So long as Captain Borrow provided his younger son with the necessaries of life and a sufficiency of pocket-money, the younger son would not have reason to complain and he would not give Captain Borrow the opportunity to do so. So that father and son lost points of contact and the son made his contacts with the great world.

At that time as in this time Norwich was only a very small part of the great world; but then as now the nature of man in Norwich and the nature of man in London were not dissimilar.

Borrow had not thought much of travelling on his own account. He was content to listen to Godless Billy's account of Goethe in Germany or Southey in England. Yet it sometimes palled him to sit in a library when he might have been in the fields. But Jasper Petulengro was no longer in the fields; and besides, ale was not sold there.

Borrow continued to think of Taylor as an old radical. Yet at Taylor's house he met another man, doubtless both scholar and gentleman — although much later George saw fit to voice his doubts about these words as applied to this man — who was an Old Radical with initial capitals. This was John Bowring.

John Bowring could make his way about in the world in which Borrow and Godless Billy lived and

moved, but he was something of a politician as well. He was later to become Sir John Bowring.

Bowring saw in the maturing young Lavengro a prodigy. George observed this, and from the beginning he was of two minds in thinking about it. He would say to himself: " Bowring is a man who will help me "; and again he would say: " Bowring is a man who will get all he can out of me." Bowring never suspected the mental treachery which Borrow concealed against the time it would serve him; and the two got on very well together at times, and at other times they were at sixes and sevens. At such times even the joviality which is ordinarily the concomitant of potable liquor did not serve to swing them in the right direction.

Godless Billy Taylor sat at the table and watched his friends. The discussion would come to vagabondage. Borrow would say: " The gipsies are the only real vagabonds." To which John Bowring would reply: " The real vagabonds are dead."

Then George would get hot under the collar, and he would not say anything, but he would know in his own mind that one day all England should see for itself where was vagabondage. And he would treasure up his little animosities, and one day the world would know that John Bowring was a fakir.

Bowring was not a fakir; he was a very learned man; and his translations from unusual tongues were better than Borrow's own. But the youth would have

none of this. He remained friendly with Bowring, awaiting the time when he need not be friendly. And presently John Bowring was gone from Norwich, and Godless Billy and Lavengro drank each the other's health again.

And then, early in 1824, Captain Borrow fell ill. His favourite son, John, who was by then copying the old masters in the Louvre, was called home from Paris to cheer the old man — he was sixty-five — in his last days.

George had a long talk with his father. They were unable to come to any agreement satisfactory to themselves. George had learned practically nothing of the law, and he assured his father that he would be unable to support himself by the languages he had learned. But, George suggested comfortably, as a last resort there was suicide. The old man was horrified.

George decided that he had been sufficiently dramatic. While awaiting John's return, he would read aloud from the Bible to his father, and this brought them a little closer together. And then, finally, John, the well beloved, came home.

It made no difference. The old man was tired of the world. His pension would cease with his death, but his widow would not be unprovided for. There was a small annuity to keep the wolf from the door.

So Captain Borrow died — in George's arms. It was strange, too: neither the boy nor his father was

in favour of such an end. But so it occurred, on the 28th of February 1824.

There was now nothing to hold George in Norwich. He kissed his mother and shook hands with Godless Billy and set out for London.

On the road to London George repeatedly asked himself where was the worth of life. His father had been an honest man and a good citizen; he had lived until growing old as most men grow old; and then he had died. George could not understand this: George was a superstitious lad for all he had been Taylor's disciple. Then would he, George, who was ambitious, but who had no commendable purpose in life, die soon? George wanted to know; but he had no means of knowing; and soon he was in London.

When George came up to London, on the 2nd of April, he had thirty pounds, a bundle of worthless manuscript, and a letter from William Taylor to the publisher Sir Richard Phillips. The letter in time proved worthless also.

Richard Phillips was a publisher unlike any other of his own or a later day. He had a reputation, to which he was entitled by common consent; but he was a little mad. His eye was on the glory of the moment; he did not believe in posterity; he chose to bask in the unreflected light of his own sun. His mania assumed the form of a desire for greater and yet greater reputation; but he had no wish simultaneously to benefit his authors.

Borrow was new to London, and he had no knowledge of publishing, but he was not long in appreciating the calibre of Sir Richard. But for the present he dreamed of Parnassus, and he had no other where to go.

Phillips had recognized in Borrow a talent perhaps to be assayed in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence, and in so doing he was prompted to invite Godless Billy's find to dinner.

At dinner George made a tremendous error. He learned that the publisher was a vegetarian, which was then, to George at least, something of a phenomenon. George made no bones about his attitude. He caused Phillips to feel that, since he was not a meat-eater, he lacked some of his wits; George manifested this impression, not by open ridicule, but by ill-concealed intonations in his speech. But for the moment Sir Richard was agreeably mannered. He diverted the conversation towards current literary activities, and presently they were speaking of *The Dairyman's Daughter*. This book was an intellectual swindle, but in 1824 it was a best seller in the book marts, so that Phillips asked George whether or not he could write a book in this style.

George had not read *The Dairyman's Daughter*, but he promised to get hold of a copy at once and try his hand at similar composition. Sir Richard smiled, and they parted as friends.

Borrow got the book he wanted, read it, and

began to write a book like it with a light heart. Phillips had promised him ten pounds for a satisfactory manuscript; this was not a great offer, but to young Borrow it was better news than he had hoped for. He was at last beginning in the field of letters.

But, before George had got well into the swing of his book, Sir Richard changed his mind. He no longer wanted the tale he had suggested and he now had other plans.

It seems that the publisher had some pretensions to being an original philosopher. He had written a book imposingly called *Essays on the Proximate Mechanical Causes of the General Phenomena of the Universe,* which was to revolutionize all previous philosophical speculation. And to George was delegated the task of translating this book into German.

The title alone shocked Borrow, but he decided to go ahead with the job, supremely, ignorantly confident. For it must be admitted that practically all of the Word-Master's knowledge of languages had been gleaned from grammars and dictionaries — principally dictionaries — so that, while he could read well, his translations were consequently stilted and too frequently literal. He had accepted a position almost impossible of being acceptably filled by him, for, aside from his obvious limitations, the vocabulary of philosophy is as different from that of the novel as that of the novel is different from street parlance.

After George had translated a few pages of the

philosophy, he lost some of his confidence, and his own doubts transmitted themselves to Sir Richard. Phillips's knowledge of the German language was inconsiderable; but his estimation of George's capabilities had begun to dwindle, and, to make certain that *Essays on the Proximate Mechanical Causes of the General Phenomena of the Universe* was receiving adequate attention, he took the first chapter of the translated manuscript to some German friends and asked them for a reading.

Shortly afterwards Phillips came upon Borrow and cried: "Sir, you know nothing of German; I have shown your translation of the first chapter of my philosophy to several Germans: it is utterly unintelligible to them."

"Did they see the philosophy?" queried Borrow.

"They did, sir, but they did not profess to understand English."

George smiled unholily. "No more do I," he said, "if that philosophy be English."

But even this incident did not serve to sever their connexion. Sir Richard was more and more disappointed in George, but he felt that there must be something in the youth that, once brought out, could not but give both of them cause to rejoice. It was then that Phillips thought of *Celebrated Trials*.

This work was to be a history of crime and criminals carried completely up to the moment. Its author — compiler really — need have neither style

nor taste, only diligence. Sir Richard was reasonably sure that George had this. George had. He needed it.

Celebrated Trials, and Remarkable Cases of Criminal Jurisprudence from the Earliest Records to the Year 1825 was undoubtedly the hardest job George ever set out to do and did. For the better part of a year he laboured on this book, exhausting his own resources in securing the data to bring it to completion; it had been a provision of the contract that George was to bear the expense of collecting such material as was necessary. The *Trials* when completed filled six volumes of several thousand pages, and Borrow received fifty pounds as payment in full. He then gave Sir Richard good-bye, and Sir Richard was glad to see him go.

George was now free to do as he chose. He had formerly in fact been free, but even at this early age he had drunk of the cup of self-delusion: he could bring himself into such a state of mind that he need only have a belief to make the belief a reality.

George has asserted in his own record that at this time, after he had broken with Richard Phillips, he wrote a book called " The Life and Adventures of Joseph Sell, the Great Traveller." He apparently believed that he did write this book, and from this belief arose a great search to determine whether or not it had been written, and if so when and where it was published. The lack of evidence, however, seems

to bear out the hypothesis that Joseph Sell existed only in Borrow's mind.

But in this period he did bring out one book, although it was not of his own creation. This was *Faustus: His Life, Death and Descent into Hell,* which George had translated from the German of Klinger. This was published early in 1825, but it was not a book expected to bring either reputation or money, and George was getting tired of semi-starvation. He had been in London fourteen months, and for all the good he had got out of it, it was fourteen months too long.

CHAPTER THREE

WHEN GEORGE LEFT LONDON, in May 1825, he certainly was not a fledgling. Neither did he look like an old man, although his hair was pretty grey by this time. But his cheeks were smooth, he looked young, and he was young. The grey hair gave him dignity.

But dignity seems out of place in a common tramp, and that is what George was. He had a few pounds in his pockets, and the clothing he wore was serviceable; and there he was, hiking down an English road without a worry in the world, with no responsibility and a future that was problematical at best.

Upon this road George met a tinker named Jack Slingsby, who seemed to be in a great hurry. He was urging his pony to speed on with the cart, causing the tins and pots in the cart to bang around with fine hullabaloo. But Lavengro, who was a talkative lad, was able to make other people talk too, and pretty soon he had Jack Slingsby's history, and on top of that he had Slingsby's pony and cart and trade

tools, all for five pounds ten shillings. Slingsby's worries also were included in the bargain. Slingsby's chief worry was the Flaming Tinman. This was Staffordshire, the Flaming Tinman's territory, and this fellow had told Slingsby to move or be moved. Slingsby had moved, and now he warned George to beware of the Flaming Tinman.

George laughed. He knew nothing of the occupation of tinkering, but he had no wish to remain idle, and he sent Jack Slingsby on his way rejoicing. And George did know how to camp; and in the cart were a tent, a mattress, a blanket, some provisions, and more kitchen utensils than he would ever be able to use.

So Lavengro progressed over the beat he had acquired, and on occasion he did a little work, mostly on the strength of Slingsby's reputation. In this manner he was able to keep alive.

Staffordshire was at that time infested with gipsies. Borrow had pitched his tent among them, and renewed his friendship with Petulengro, and for the first time since leaving Norwich he was content.

And then one day Mrs. Herne, Jasper Petulengro's mother-in-law, sent Lavengro two cakes. They were lovely cakes, and they had been brought by a girl-messenger, and George saw nothing to do but eat them.

He was shortly sorry for having done so. The cakes had been poisoned, and while George lay ill

and feverish in his tent, Mrs. Herne came over with the girl-messenger and leered at him.

Probably Borrow would have died, but when he had despaired of life, a Welsh preacher and his wife happened to be passing his tent and they heard his groans. They were good people, and, further, they had no immediate calls upon their time, so that they remained nine days with George, nursing him and giving him medicine, until he was again well. Mrs. Herne, poor lady, was thus cheated of her pleasure.

The gipsies meanwhile had departed the neighbourhood, and George decided to go along with his new friends, who were making for Wales. But at the Welsh border he once more met Jasper, and George, accepting a Welsh Bible from the preacher and bestowing his thanks upon him and his wife, turned back with Petulengro.

Lavengro was still a *choveno* [1] fellow: that is, he was neither needy nor hungry, but at the same time, and there was no doubt of it, he needed to be bucked up, and Jasper Petulengro was just the lad to accomplish this.

Jasper succeeded. He and Borrow passed the time of day. They discoursed upon the frivolity of the gipsies as a people. They discoursed upon the reticence of the British as a people. They discoursed upon a number of things, none very pertinent or amusing,

[1] Well-to-do; but George's clothes were doubtless rags.

so that presently George began to wonder why he had ever chosen Jasper as a friend.

But Jasper succeeded. For after a little, Jasper told George that Mrs. Herne was dead.

Dead! George sighed slightly and looked at the gipsy strangely.

Yes, brother, she committed suicide.

Committed suicide! George sighed again not so slightly and rubbed his chin. "How is this?" he said.

She had hanged herself, poor lady. Jasper had discovered her, back there in Wales.

So Jasper and George went on, until at last they were come to the parting of their ways, although Jasper had invited Lavengro to come along with him. But George had said no, on which refusal the gipsy described to Borrow a certain dingle which that young man might find congenial to his occupation.

The dingle was a deep hollow in the midst of a wide field; there were trees and bushes all about, and a path led down. The path was wide enough for a cart. At the bottom was an open space suitable for a tent.

George loosed the pony from the cart. He said to himself: "I will here ply the trade of *kaulomescro*." [2]

For two days George tried his hand at mending pots and pans in the dingle. He was then ready to move; and he would have moved had he not at the

[2] Tinker.

moment of his decision heard the creaking of wheels not of his own cart. The creaking sounded always nearer, and George apprehended that the cart was coming to the dingle. He then knew that it was just as well that he was going.

But George gave up the harnessing of his pony and went forward to where the path emerged into the dingle, so that he might give his visitors welcome. He knew that there was more than one person, for he had heard a female voice also. The female voice wanted to know what was the matter, for the man with the cart had halted upon seeing George before him.

George said, that he might make his peace with the man: "You need not be afraid, I mean you no harm; I am a wanderer like yourself — come here to seek for shelter — you need not be afraid; I am a Rome *chabo*[3] by matriculation — one of the right sort, and no mistake — good day to ye, brother; I bids ye welcome."

The man was a ruffianly-looking fellow; he was about six feet high, with an immensely athletic frame; his face was black and bluff, and sported a great pair of whiskers, but with here and there a grey hair, for his age could not have been much under fifty. He wore a faded blue frock-coat, corduroys, and high-lows; on his black head was a kind of red night-cap; and around his neck was a Barcelona handkerchief.

[3] Gipsy. George never missed an opportunity to brag about this; opportunity lacking, he dragged it in anyhow.

It was a thick bull neck, and the handkerchief was a tight fit.

The man said: " Afraid. H'm! " And he led his horse and cart to one side of the dingle. He unharnessed the horse and growled: " Afraid; that was the word, I think."

But George was now intent upon the two women who followed the man. One was a pretty girl about eighteen years old; George liked her eyes. The other was an ugly hag about forty years old, and George did not like anything about her.

The pretty girl was tall and her complexion was fair. She looked with contempt upon George, who was not yet recovered entirely from the poison Mrs. Herne, poor lady, had fed him; and she looked with respect upon the Flaming Tinman. For the great fellow who mumbled was the Flaming Tinman, no less.

Now this great fellow continued to mumble about " afraid was the word," he thought; and this put young George on edge. So Borrow stepped up to the Flaming Tinman and said: " It was, but I think I wronged you; I should have said ' aghast '; you exhibited every symptom of one labouring under uncontrollable fear."

The great fellow was stupefied. But the tall pretty girl was not; she took George, not for an idiot, but for a fool; and she slapped George's face, once, so that he was like to lose his balance; but he stood up, ready to be friends and call it a day. The Flaming

Tinman would not now have it so. He saw George's pony and cart, and recognized them as having been the property of Jack Slingsby. So there were words. Lavengro made excuses while the Flaming Tinman laughed at them.

Then there were blows. The Flaming Tinman rushed upon Borrow, and George struck out with his left hand, the fist of which engaged itself with the Flaming Tinman's nose. But the tall girl looked doubtfully at George, saying: " You'll never beat the Flaming Tinman in that way."

Shortly George was made aware of this. For the giant got his antagonist down, and George would have been throttled; but the tall girl changed her tactics and was become George's ally. She made it known that this was no fair way to do battle and dragged the big tinker off the prostrate Borrow. The ugly hag with her disapproved this action and exhorted the Flaming Tinman to continue, but with the tall girl's interference he was unable to do so. Then George spat a pint of blood and rose shakily to his feet. He returned to the battle gamely enough, and he remembered Tawno Chikno and the boxing-lessons. A pity now that he had not taken more of them. A tall draught of ale, that was what he needed to set him right.

The old hag was now the Flaming Tinman's second; the tall girl was Borrow's. She advised George to use Long Melford, which was, it developed, the right

hand. But George was convinced of the uselessness of his right hand.

And now the Flaming Tinman was once more ready, much more ready than George was. The great fellow advanced upon the youth; George felt the wind from his blows, and when there was contact, it was worse. And at last the Flaming Tinman aimed a blow that would doubtless have ended the battle had it taken full effect; but the giant's fist slipped and came with terrific force against a tree close to which George had been driven; and before the Flaming Tinker could recover himself, George collected all his strength and struck the cove beneath the ear, and then fell to the ground completely exhausted. And it so happened that the blow that struck the tinker beneath the ear was a right-handed blow.

"Hurrah for Long Melford!" Borrow heard the tall girl exclaim; "there is nothing like Long Melford for shortness the world over."

George had knocked the Flaming Tinman down, but at first he was not aware of it. He himself lay on the ground tired, worn out. But he heard the tall girl's words and turned his head. He saw that the big tinker lay senseless beside him.

The tinman, no longer flaming, got up at last with all the fight gone out of him. He led his horse and cart out of the dingle, and the ugly woman went with him. The tall girl remained.

Her name, she said to George, was Isopel Berners, but she was called Belle.

Belle had quite a history. She came of good people, but she had been born in a workhouse. She had been put in service with a private family at the age of fourteen; she remained there long enough to knock her mistress down, and then she went back to the workhouse. Again she was put in service, and this time she knocked her master to the floor. Then she ran away to live with an old gentlewoman. This lady died after two years and Belle had had to wander aimlessly for a time, until she joined the Flaming Tinman and his old woman. Now she had left them and was at George's service.

She told George this that evening in the dingle. They were sitting at the fire toasting their toes; it was not cold, but Lavengro was chilly after his battle of the afternoon.

He said: " I feel very strangely."

The tall girl looked at him through the flames. " How do you feel, young man? "

" Very much afraid."

" Afraid, at what? At the Flaming Tinman? Don't be afraid of him. He won't come back, and if he did, he shouldn't touch you in this state. I'd fight him for you."

" I'm not afraid of the Flaming Tinman; the Evil One, that's what I'm afraid of."

For George had never put away the superstitions

of his childhood. He was often attacked by spells of what he called "the horrors," a form of delirium brought upon him by either mental or physical excitement. He also, even to the end of his life, touched against the "evil chance," [4] a bogy that could be warded off by placing the fingers against an object, such as a tree or a fence, in passing.

But Belle was practical. "The Evil One," she said, "where is he?"

"Coming upon me."

"Never you mind," said Belle. "I'll stand by you."

And stand by George she did, although he never indicated to what extent. He insists in the book *Lavengro* that his relations with her were strictly Platonic; but young George was no fool, however much he wished to be thought one.

Now, the fact of the matter is that Isopel Berners was in love with Lavengro. That is to say, the girl had suddenly tired of the Flaming Tinman; and the cause of this suddenness was the advent in her life of George Borrow. George was no ascetic; he breathed the breath of life and found it good, and this was evident to Belle. She saw that George was alone, and she felt that being so would do him no good.

Being alone had not done George a great deal of good. He saw in Belle a pretty young woman who

[4] Dr. Johnson also touched against the evil eye.

was not averse from having a good time, even though the time be spent in a dingle where were few visitors: in short, that would be the principal attraction of the dingle for them. So they became as one, in the eyes of God.

Does George say so? He does not.

George, in his book, makes it appear that Belle was in love with him, that he was not in love with her, and that her love for him was unrequited. In fine, George makes it appear that he tortured this girl by causing her to conjugate the verb "to love" in Armenian the while her heart ached for him. But it is not fair to Borrow to accept this account.

In the first place, Belle Berners was neither studious nor senseless. Her mind was good; doubtless had she applied herself to the study of Armenian or any other language she would in a short time have conjugated a simple verb. And while the documentary evidence is that she did so, the internal evidence is that she and Lavengro applied themselves to the verb "to love" actively and disregarded its etymological significance.

Each found the other a satisfactory if not ideal lover. George had not formerly loved; his contact with women had been of the slightest. The women he had visited in Norwich — there were several — had devoted themselves to him a few short moments with a purpose wholly mercenary. That which was lacking

in their companionship with George they had been unable to supply.

Belle was the opposite of this. She sought in George a friend. She had little use for money. She wanted to live, and she did live, realistically.

George aided her in living. He learned new truths from her. They were not new really, they were new only to him, and he was now sensible of another side of life. It was beautiful to him mainly because Belle was beautiful to him. Indeed, he was not seriously in error: the day of magnetic personality had not yet arrived, neither was " charm " a stock word in the vocabulary of romanticists; but these qualities Isopel Berners possessed in adequate proportion. George was her humble servant and she his.

Then why did he lie?

He lied because it was the thing to do, and George wanted to do the proper thing where Belle was concerned. You see, he loved the woman.

It seems a pity that he did not love her longer than he did. It seems that the Fates might have permitted them a greater happiness. They were young, they loved life, they loved each other.

George himself caused the trouble. They were lying in the dingle, looking at the sky. George began to talk about love. Very likely his remembrance of this conversation suggested to him the conjugation of the verb when he sat down to write about himself and Belle.

Now, talking about love was a mistake. Up to then George and Belle had been content to accept themselves in the dingle as they were; they had made no declarations, she was not worried about her young man's intentions, and if the young man had any intentions, he was not aware of them. He had discovered life.

But George talked about love. The tall girl listened, and at the same time she was afraid. She now knew that she and her lover must go their separate ways. For George was going to declare himself; he was bound to make a good woman of her, and she did not want to be a good woman. There was as yet little discussion in the world of the emancipation of woman, and had there been, Belle Berners was not in a position to hear it; but she had her own ideas and she carried them out.

George waked up one morning to find the tall girl had gone out of the dingle, out of his life.

The trade of *kaulomescro* interested George no longer. He disposed of the pony and cart and went once more to the fair, in search of gipsies or what else offered.

Something offered in the person of a gambler, a lad who was not clever enough to be a card-sharper and must needs make a living with a swindle already cut and dried for him. His was the old shell-game.

Well, George was at the fair, and it didn't take him long to see through the fellow with the walnuts.

George was standing before a tent — as was by now almost an old custom with him — when presently the sharper came out, carrying a small table, which he set up without delay in front of Borrow, as he did not know that the youth had no money.

George and the gambler exchanged the time of day. The gambler said: " Will your lordship play at thimble and pea? "

Now, be it known that formerly George had not been called " my lord "; the designation surprised him and flattered him not a little. At the same time he was aware of the fellow's intentions: the man was out to make what he could; it happened, simply, that Borrow was in no condition to play at thimble and pea. Politely he refused.

" Why not, my lord? " said the gambler.

" Why," replied George, " in the first place, I have no money."

The effect of this statement upon the sensibilities of the gambler was ludicrous. He blushed at the time he had wasted, as well as at the mock servility he had demonstrated. Simultaneously he reflected upon the discomforts of his calling, its attendant worries, and the difficulty of attracting heavy purses so that they might be exploited with the lighter. This thought gave him an idea, and the idea gave him courage, and the courage gave him speech.

The gambler now made as if to depart, but he eyed George considerately and asked that young man

to come a distance with him, away from alien ears. George followed, mystified: the spirit of adventure had conquered. He could not waste time because he was wealthy in the possession of time and had naught of worldly goods.

They walked along the plain until they were come to a dry pit. The gambler placed his table on the grass; then he too sat down, letting his legs hang over the side of the pit. George sat beside him.

" So you're out of employ, eh? "

George admitted that he was.

" I think I can find you some."

" What kind? " said George.

" Why," said the man, " I think you would do to be my bonnet."

" Bonnet! " said George, " what is that? "

" Don't you know? However, no wonder, as you had never heard of the thimble-and-pea game, but I will tell you. We of the game are very much exposed; folks when they have lost their money, as those who play with us mostly do, sometimes use rough language, call us cheats, and sometimes knock our hats over our eyes; and what's more, with a kick under our table, cause the top deals to fly off; this is the third table I have used this day, the two others being broken by uncivil customers; so we of the game generally like to have gentlemen go about with us to take our part and encourage us, though pretending to know nothing about us; for example, when the

customer says: ' I'm cheated,' the bonnet must say: ' No, you a'n't, it is all right '; or when my hat is knocked over my eyes, the bonnet must square and say: ' I never saw the man before in my life, but I won't see him ill-used '; and so, when they kicks at the table, the bonnet must say: ' I won't see the table ill-used; such a nice table too; besides, I want to play myself '; and then I would say to the bonnet: ' Thank you, my lord; them that finds, wins '; and then the bonnet plays, and I lets the bonnet win."

" In a word," said George, who was by now interested, although far from convinced, " the bonnet means the man who covers you, even as the real bonnet covers the head."

" Just so," said the man, " I see you are wide-awake and would soon make a first-class bonnet."

Borrow stared at his hands. He cracked his knuckles and smiled. " Bonnet," he mused; " bonnet; it is metaphorical."

" Is it? " wondered the gambler.

" Yes, like the cant words — "

" ' Bonnet ' is cant," said the man; " we of the thimble, as well as all clyfakers and the like, understand cant, as, of course, must every bonnet; so, if you are employed by me, you had better learn it as soon as you can, that we may discourse together without being understood by everyone. Besides covering his principal, a bonnet must have his eyes about him, for the trade of the pea, though a strictly honest one,

is not altogether lawful; so it is the duty of the bonnet, if he sees the constable coming, to say the gorgio's welling."

Borrow smiled. "That is not cant," said he, "that is the language of the Romany *Chals*."

The gambler's interest was now greater than it had been. He learned that George knew not only the gipsies, but also their language; whereupon he said: "I wish I did. I would give ten pounds and more to know the language of the Romany *Chals*. There's some of it in the language of the pea and thimble; how it came there I don't know, but so it is. I wish I knew it, but it is difficult. You'll make a capital bonnet; shall we close?"

"What would the wages be?" George demanded.

"Why, to a first-rate bonnet, as I think you would prove, I could afford to give from forty to fifty shillings a week."

"Is it possible?" said Lavengro.

"Good wages, eh?" said the man.

"First-rate," admitted George; "bonneting is more profitable than reviewing."

"Anan?" said the man.

"Or translating; I don't think I should have been paid so much for translating Æsop."

It was the gambler's turn to smile. "Oh, I know what that is, *Æsop's* cant for 'a hunchback'; but the work, how about the work?"

" Well," said Borrow, " I find no fault with the wages, but I don't like the employ."

" Not like bonneting," said the man; " ah, I see, you would like to be principal; well, a time may come — those long white fingers of yours would just serve for the business."

George knew but little of the thimble and pea; so he said: " Is it a difficult one? "

" Why, it is not very easy; two things are needful — natural talent, and constant practice; but I'll show you a point or two connected with the game."

George was all eagerness. As yet he had not the least intention of becoming a " bonnet " or in any other wise connecting himself with ill-varnished theft as a profession; but this cove with the thimble and peas knew his business. Borrow was ripe to witness a demonstration of it.

The lad Lavengro was enlightened shortly. The gambler was a slow fellow; had he been dealing three-card monte he could not but have lost. He was not quick, and only the fact that during the shuffle he was at liberty to transfer the pellet from the table to his palm, against which it was pressed by his little finger, enabled him to continue as a gambler. A gambler? A thief, more properly. But what of it? George had been up against thieves time and time again: the censor did not warn him on such occasions as this, and his wonder was that this fellow could take money

from townsmen, however provincial. It was a dirty low-down shame, that's what it was. George did not say so, because although the gambler with the table was slow, his game was simple and he was better at it than George could have been. George lay back and kicked his heels over the pit and laughed.

The gambler asked Borrow if the game was not a funny one. When George had replied in the affirmative, he said: " I'm glad you like it; come along and let us win some money."

Lavengro sat up. " Merely for my own pleasure," he said suddenly, " I like sitting here very well."

" Then you won't close? "

" By no means: your proposal does not suit me."

" You may be the principal in time."

" That makes no difference to me," said George; and forthwith he began to decline an Armenian noun.

" That's not cant nor gipsy either. Well," said the man, " if you won't close, another will, and I can't lose any more time." So he departed.

Lavengro waited awhile. Then he rose and wandered about the fair. There were many shows in progress, but they were monotonous: seeing one was seeing them all. George was ready to go. On his way he came upon a group of people standing before the table of the thimble-and-pea fellow. George halted and watched.

Nobody was able to find the pellet. At last there was an undertone of discontent, and it became mumbled about that the fellow was a thief and a cheat. The man cried: "Never cheated anybody in all my life"; then, observing that George was at hand: "Didn't I play fair, my lord?" he inquired. Lavengro kept his mouth shut.

The gambler changed his tactics and permitted one or two people to win, after which the suckers swarmed about him. George sighed at the eternal helplessness of the male human being. He sighed for his own helplessness. And gamblers bored him this day.

But as he began to move away, he noticed the advance of a short, thick person with a staff in his hand, and it was clearly to be seen that this person was no other than the constable. So that George exclaimed impulsively:

"*Shoon thimble engro;*
Avella gorgio." [5]

The gambler had no sooner heard the last word of this distich than he lifted his table, slipped thimbles and peas in his pocket, yelled to the people about him

[5] The use of *engro* can nowhere be made plainer than here. "Go, thimble-man (-master, -fellow, -worker); a (the) *gorgio* (literally a Gentile, but invariably, as here, anyone not a gipsy being understood) comes." Probably what George called out was: "The gorgio's welling"; the distich quoted too closely approximates poetry for Shorsha to have reeled it off without deliberation!

to make way, motioned with his head to Borrow to follow him, and darted off to become lost in the crowd.

George sighed again. He had passed up a vocation. It meant more money to him than he could then have made in any other way, but he would not have been amused or interested. He had no qualms about selling his soul for hire, but he must be entertained. He turned in a direction opposite to the one the gimp had taken and wandered along the green. His throat was as parched as the sands of the desert, quite as hot as the sands of the desert. His one hope of salvation lay in a good drink. There must be one somewhere. He wandered on.

At last he drew near to a place where several men, with a cask beside them, sat carousing in the neighbourhood of a small tent. As George progressed, he became possessed of an immense thirst. If he did not have a drink soon, the " horrors " would be upon him. He hurried on, still in the direction of the revellers, but not knowing whether to pass them by or to halt and drink with them.

And then, as he was trying to make up his mind, one of the men stood up and sang:

" Here the gipsy gemman see,
With his Roman jib and his rome and dree —
Rome and dree, rum and dry,
Rally round the Romany Rye."

The singer was Jasper Petulengro. "Sit down, brother," said Mr. Petulengro, "and take a cup of good ale."

George sat down. "Your health, gentlemen," he said.

CHAPTER FOUR

BORROW WAS RIPE for trouble. He was in a public house and had had about seven drinks too many, so that there was no holding him in. He wanted argument, and he wanted a chance to prove his argument. He wanted, most of all, to prove it to the Man in Black.

For George had not yet decided whither he was drifting. Any way he looked he was confused. So he had decided to commit himself in some one fashion and then keep to that fashion. He sneered openly at the Man in Black, who was too preoccupied to look in George's direction.

There were three men in the inn besides George and the Man in Black. One of them, who appeared to have been a Red (there were Reds in those days), had been lauding America and ridiculing England. He ended by saying: " So when I gets to New York, I will toss up my hat, and damn the King. Who would live in such a country as England? "

The Red had a companion, who appeared to be a

Tramp. The Tramp said: " There is no country like America; I think I shall go to America one of these days."

The third man in the place to speak, who appeared to be a Fool, sat alone. He said: " Poor old England is not such a bad country after all. If there was but a little more work to be got, I should have nothing to say against her. I hope, however — "

" You hope! Who cares what you hope? " shouted the Red viciously; " you are one of those sneaking hounds who are satisfied with dog's wages, a bit of bread, and a kick. Work, indeed! Who, with the spirit of a man, would work for a country where there is liberty neither of speech, nor of action, a land full of beggarly aristocracy, hungry borough-mongers, insolent parsons, and ' their — wives and daughters,' as William Cobbett says in his *Register.*"

" Ah! The Church of England has been a source of incalculable mischief to these realms," said the Man in Black.

George licked his lips, but " You are quite right," said the Red, " the Church of England has done incalculable mischief here. I value no religion three halfpence, for I believe in none; but the one that I hate most is the Church of England; so when I get to New York, after I have shown the fine fellows on the quay a spice of me, by — the King, I'll toss up my hat again, and — the Church of England too."

George gulped some ale and grinned. " And

suppose the people of New York should clap you in the stocks? " he said.

The other four men turned their attention to George. The Red and the Tramp glared at him; the Man in Black surveyed him oddly; the Fool laughed.

" What are you laughing at, you fool? Hold your noise," said the Red to the Fool, who seemed to be afraid of him. " And a pretty fellow *you* are," he continued, speaking to Borrow, " to come here and speak against the great American nation."

" I speak against the great American nation? " said George; " I paid them rather a compliment."

" By supposing they would put me in the stocks. Well, I call it abusing them, to suppose they would do any such thing — stocks, indeed! — there are no stocks in all the land. Put me in the stocks? Why, the President will come down to the quay and ask me to dinner, as soon as he hears what I have said about the King and the Church."

" I shouldn't wonder," said George, " if when you go to America, you will say of the President and country what you now say of the King and Church, and cry out for somebody to send you back to England."

The Red dashed his pipe to pieces against the table and spat savagely. " I tell you what, young fellow, you are a spy of the aristocracy, sent here to kick up a disturbance."

George replied easily: " Kicking up a disturb-

ance is rather inconsistent with the office of spy. If I were a spy, I should hold my head down and say nothing."

"Well, if you aren't sent to spy, you are sent to bully, to prevent people speaking, and to run down the great American nation; but you shan't bully me. I say: 'Down with the aristocracy, the beggarly British aristocracy.' Come, what have you to say to that?"

"Nothing," said George. "Down with them as soon as you can."

"As soon as I can! I wish I could. But I can down with a bully of theirs. Come, will you fight for them?"

"No."

"You won't?"

"No; though from what I have seen of them I should say they are tolerably able to fight for themselves."

The Red glowed triumphantly. "I thought so; all bullies, especially those of the aristocracy, are cowards. Here, landlord, some more ale — he won't fight for his friends."

"A white feather," said the Tramp.

"He! he!" said the Man in Black.

"Landlord!" shouted the Red, "fill this jug again, and be quick about it."

"Does anyone else want anything?" said the landlord.

" Yes," said the Man in Black, " you may bring me another glass of gin and water."

" Gin and water cold, with a lump of sugar in it," said Borrow, striking the table with his fist.

" Take some? " asked the landlord.

" No, only something came into my head," said George.

" He's mad," said the Man in Black.

" Not he," said the Red. " He's only shamming; he knows his master is here and therefore has recourse to these manœuvres, but it won't do. Come, landlord, what are you staring at? Why don't you obey your orders? Keeping your customers waiting in this manner is not the way to increase your business."

The landlord left the room and returned directly with the drinks.

" Here is your health, sir," said the Red to the Man in Black. " I honour you for what you said about the Church of England. Everyone who speaks against the Church of England has my warm heart. Down with it, I say, and may the stones be used for mending the roads, as my friend William says in his *Register*."

The Man in Black drank to the Red. " With respect to the steeples," said he, " I am not altogether of your opinion; they might be turned to better account than to serve to mend the roads; they might still be used as places of worship, but not for the worship of the Church of England. I have no fault to find with the steeples, it is the Church itself that I am

compelled to arraign, but it will not stand long, the respectable part of its ministers are already leaving it. It is a bad Church, a persecuting Church."

George found his tongue. He said: " Whom does it persecute? "

The Man in Black said slowly: " The Catholics."

" And do those whom you call Catholics never persecute? "

" Never," said the Man in Black.

" Did you ever read Foxe's *Book of Martyrs?* "

" He! he! " tittered the Man in Black, " there is not a word of truth in that book."

Borrow sipped his gin and replied: " Ten times more than in the *Flos sanctorum.*"

The Man in Black said nothing.

" And," George went on, " what do you say to the massacre of the Albigenses and the Vaudois, ' whose bones lie scattered on the cold Alp,' or to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes? "

The Man in Black held his peace.

" Go to," said George, " it is because the Church of England is not a persecuting Church that those whom you call the respectable part are leaving her; it is because they can't do with the poor Dissenters what Simon de Montfort did with the Albigenses, and the cruel Piedmontese with the Vaudois, that they turn to bloody Rome; the Pope will no doubt welcome them, for the Pope, do you see, being very much in want, will welcome — "

" Hullo! " growled the Red. " What are you saying about the Pope? I say hurrah for the Pope: I value no religion three halfpence, as I said before, but if I were to adopt any, it should be the Popish, as it's called, because I conceives the Popish to be the grand enemy of the Church of England, of the beggarly aristocracy, and the borough-monger system, so I won't hear the Pope abused while I am by. Come, don't look fierce. You won't fight, you know, I have proved it; but I will give you another chance — I will fight for the Pope, will you fight against him? "

George got up saying: " Oh dear me, yes. I am a quiet, peaceable young man and, being so, am always ready to fight against the Pope — the enemy of all peace and quiet — to refuse fighting for the aristocracy is a widely different thing from refusing to fight against the Pope — so come on, if you are disposed to fight for him. To the Pope broken bells, to Saint James broken shells. No popish vile oppression, but the Protestant succession. Confusion to the Groyne, hurrah for the Boyne, for the army at Clonmel, and the Protestant young gentlemen who live there as well. . . . I am waiting here to fight against the Pope."

" Come," said the Tramp to the Red, " get up and fight for the Pope."

" I don't care for the young fellow," said the Red.

" I know you don't," said the Tramp; " so get up and serve him out."

" I could serve out three like him," said the Red.

" So much the better for you," said the Tramp, " the present work will be all the easier for you; get up, and serve him out at once."

The Red sat sulking. " Who shows the white feather now? " said the Fool.

" He! he! he! " tittered the Man in Black.

" Who told you to interfere? " growled the Red at the Fool; " say another word and I'll — And you! " to the Man in Black, " a pretty fellow you are to turn against me after I had taken your part. I tell you what, you may fight for yourself. I'll see you and your Pope in the pit of Eldon before I fight for either of you, so make the most of it."

" Then you won't fight? " said Borrow.

" Not for the Pope," said the Red; " I'll see the Pope — "

" Dear me," said George, " not fight for the Pope, whose religion you would turn to if you were inclined for any. I see how it is, you are not fond of fighting; but I'll give you another chance — you were abusing the Church of England just now. I'll fight for it — will you fight against it? "

" Come," said the Tramp, " get up and fight against the Church of England."

" I have no particular quarrel with the Church of England," said the Red. But he would have fought

this time had not the landlord suddenly interfered. So that George was cheated of his battle and the Red of his argument.

And at last Borrow stumbled out of the inn, wondering whither he was drifting. He had to side with somebody or something. . . .

"Eureka!" cried George. He was just a young fellow trying to get along — and he had formed a partnership with Jehovah!

CHAPTER FIVE

In the autumn of 1825 Borrow returned to Norwich. He remained in Norwich about two months with his mother, and then again went down to London. The " seven veiled years " followed this journey.

Although George was now only in his early twenties, he felt that, because he had not been notably successful in his undertakings, he was a failure. And in so feeling he let the mystic strain in him get the better of him.

George had read the New Testament in about thirty languages, and from none of them was he able to derive any information as to the whereabouts of Jesus the Christ from His twelfth to His thirtieth year. This puzzled George extremely. The only conclusion he could come to was that in these years Jesus had been in preparation for His mission.

Now George had no mission, and he knew it. But he certainly had to enter some field if he was to live, and he valued his life above all else. He therefore decided that if he could have some mysterious years

in his life, his chances would be all the better for success in the religious field. Religion was what now concerned him most.

George carefully thought out a schedule. He would disappear for seven years, seven because this was a mystic number, and no more because he was long ago past his twelfth year, and eighteen years would now make him an old man at their termination.

George probably did not make any definite plans, inasmuch as during that part of the veiled period in which he was travelling he had no direct route. He was now in the Orient and again in southern Europe, today in Constantinople and tomorrow in Bayonne. The only established date in the veiled period in which Borrow was on foreign soil, from the 27th to the 29th of July 1830 — the " three glorious days " of the French Revolution — proves that he did not allow his preparation for taking up the cross to disturb his lust after adventure.

The times in which he was in England in this period are more precisely known. Late in 1829 he wrote from London to his brother John — then in Mexico — and on the 22nd of May 1830 Sir John Bowring brought Borrow and the Danish poet Grundtvig together, Grundtvig requiring some transcriptions done.

But it was not Bowring who came to George for a favour. Bowring's point in bringing Grundtvig and

Borrow together was to give George a greater opportunity to familiarize himself with languages.

Borrow, in his soul, resented this. He could use a great many languages, with reasonable facility; but he was conscious of every word he knew, in whatever language it might be. This is to be accounted for by the fact that all the learning he got was acquired by virtue of a supreme slavery, and what he had he appreciated.

Bowring was, nearly, a precise opposite. His own learning he took for granted. Of course, he was a shrewd man — a business man, really, as he was a travelling merchant from 1811 to 1824; and it may be said that from his birth, in 1792, until he became editor of the *Westminster Review,* in 1824, he was in trade — but he *had* travelled, and he *did* know the right people, so that, by the grace of God and his own swagger — of which he was unconscious, as he took this for granted also — he was a big man.

But Borrow got the idea that he was being patronized; and whereas he had stood in awe of Bowring at their first meeting, George was by now not a little jealous of him and had begun to despise him.

But that would wait. It would do you good to know a big man until you yourself became a big man, and, anyhow, Lavengro had a number of schemes to make use of his friendship with Bowring. He was working on a book to be called " Songs of Scandi-

navia " on which he had help from both Bowring and Grundtvig, but this book was never published; and George also asked Bowring to get him a post in the British Museum. There is ample evidence that Bowring endeavoured to do so, but he failed, and George held the failure against him, just as he was already treasuring other fancied slights.

George then dropped out of sight until the next year, 1831, when he was commissioned by a Welsh bookseller in Smithfield to do a book of poetry by Elis Wyn called *The Sleeping Bard,* published in Welsh in 1703, for general circulation. The bookseller saw in this a work the public would take to its heart, and Borrow went to work on his translation with a good will. But on the eve of publication the Welshman said: " Were I to print it, I should be ruined; the terrible descriptions of vice and torment would frighten the genteel part of the English public out of its wits, and I should to a certainty be prosecuted. *Myn Diawl!* I had no idea, till I read him in English, that Elis Wyn had been such a terrible fellow." This, at any rate, shows that the publisher did not mistrust Borrow's ability as Sir Richard Phillips had!

The Sleeping Bard was not published until thirty years later, and then in a limited edition, after being rejected by Glorious John Murray of Albemarle Street. So George was now more certain than ever that he must get out of translating into some more

lucrative field. And the seven years were about gone: one more disappearance and he could come and go as he chose and as opportunity offered. He had made some money during that part of the veiled period in which he was in England, but not enough to keep him alive; and while he was abroad, he had begged. This he could not well do in his own country, particularly in those parts where he was known. His mother had supported him at various times; but there were other times when he was not near his mother, when he was still in England, when he was not working, and when he remained stationary. And at these times his maintenance was assured by Mary Clarke of Oulton Hall, near Lowestoft.

Mary Clarke — born Skepper — was about eight years older than George. In 1817 she had married Henry Clarke, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, who had died of consumption at the beginning of the next year; two months later his widow gave birth to a daughter, christened Henrietta Mary. But her husband's death had left her not uncomfortably situated: she had had even before her marriage an income of something more than two thousand dollars a year. Yet, while she cared a great deal for George, she could see no reason for contributing, permanently, to his support. So she said: "We'll have to get you a job."

George was not sorry. The seven "veiled" years were ended; about his life there was now an element

of mystery; he was ready to do what he was destined to do.

Mrs. Clarke introduced Borrow to the Rev. Francis Cunningham, who was duly impressed with George's acquaintance with languages. Cunningham was active in the affairs of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and on the 27th of December 1832 he wrote to the Rev. Andrew Brandham, secretary of the Society, about George. George followed the letter by walking the hundred and twelve miles to London in twenty-seven hours, taking as nourishment *en route* a glass of milk, a pint of ale, a roll, and two apples.

Borrow appeared before the Society at an opportune time. A person was needed who could translate the Manchu dialect; George knew nothing of Manchu, but he readily convinced the committee before which he appeared that he could learn the dialect before they would be able to locate another man who knew it. He was voted the sum of ten pounds, allowed to borrow books from the Society's library, and told to go ahead.

Borrow then left London, taking with him a dictionary — Amyot's Manchu-French — and a Manchu version of the Gospel of St. Matthew. As Borrow pored over his dictionary, he smiled when he recalled that Amyot had written that Manchu *might* be learned after five or six years of incessantly diligent study.

Nineteen weeks after beginning the study of Manchu, Borrow wrote to Joseph Jowett, the literary superintendent of the Bible Society, that he had mastered the language. He was then called down to London to take an examination, and then he returned to Norwich, where in a short time he received a letter from Jowett saying that his prospects of appointment were good and that in all probability he would be sent to Russia.

Borrow was jubilant. In reply he said in part: " What you have written has given me great pleasure, as it holds out hope that I may be employed usefully to the Deity, to man, and myself."

George had not familiarized himself with the idiom of Earl Street, where the offices of the Society were situate, as Jowett soon pointed out to him, by bearing down on this sentence. But George was excused, Jowett saying: " Doubtless you meant the prospect of glorifying God," and asking George not to take umbrage, since the Society had a greater excuse for doing so.

Lavengro was amenable. He had too much at stake to speak his mind. Here he was, going to Russia and getting paid for it.

The people in Norwich who had known George ten years before laughed behind his back as they remembered the days when he had been associated with Godless Billy. He was being sent to Russia to assist in converting the heathen Manchu, and no doubt

Borrow was grateful that no rumours of the days before the veiled period reached Earl Street.

So at last George had cut through the red tape of the Bible Society, and about the end of July he set off for St. Petersburg. He arrived in St. Petersburg in the middle of August 1833, with every intention of setting the world on fire with works inspired by faith.

Once in Russia, he did not go directly to the man whose associate he was to be — S. V. Lipovzoff, who had lived in China for a score or more years and studied at the National College of Peking — but instead called upon Prince Alexander Galitzin, to whom he had a letter of introduction. He was in no hurry to get to work.

When he did get busy, he ran into trouble with Lipovzoff right away. The old man had long since lost the ardour of his youth, and he thought he saw in Borrow's impetuousness — George was quick after he had settled down to his job — a stumbling-block to the program of the Society. Borrow on his part had no great estimate of Lipovzoff, because he seemed unable to combine his scholarship with business. Lipovzoff was able to do all the translating the Society required, but getting it printed and bound was another matter. And the fact that he was unable to do this seemed to discourage him, so that he had allowed to pile up a great deal of matter which should have been translated long ago.

George did not neglect, in his correspondence

with the Society, to tell them these things. He spoke of Lipovzoff as a singular man, utterly indifferent to the fate of his translation; but Lipovzoff was also an official in the Russian Foreign Office in addition to his other duties and Borrow could not affect him one way or the other.

Lavengro did not accomplish a great deal during his first six months in St. Petersburg. He had the bulk of his translating done, but none of it had gone to press, and he had not considered the problem of distribution at all. The New Testament in Manchu was done, but nobody was able to read it.

George now demonstrated that he was a capable fellow, for all his inconsistency. Some years before, Lipovzoff had possessed a font of type in Manchu, the only one in St. Petersburg, which had been disarranged and damaged by floods, and no attempt had been made to salvage or replace the characters. He got this type out of the cellar in which it had been stored, and cleaned it, saving that part of it that could still be used. He then engaged the services of a compositor to assist him, but found he could set up the type himself as well. George then encountered a snag that he had thought was out of his way.

This was that he was by no means as proficient in Manchu as he had supposed. This meant that he now had to let the printing go for a while so that he could study.

It was here that he made use of his acquaintance

with the Baron Schilling de Canstadt. De Canstadt had one of the finest libraries in Imperial Russia, to which he had granted Borrow full access. George delved deeply among the volumes in the hope of finding some help with his Manchu, and while he was browsing among them he made a translation of one of the sacred books of Fo. For one thing, this kept him from a too great association with the Bible, else he had tired of being constantly with it; and, for another, it awakened in him the desire to bring out in English a book of translations from several tongues.

Lavengro was now afire with enthusiasm for his contemplated book. He neglected the work of the Society and began to work on *Targum, or Metrical Translations from Thirty Languages and Dialects.* This was published in 1835 by Schultz and Beneze; but the book was unimportant, its only interest being the different tongues whence it was derived, which were: ancient British, ancient Danish, ancient Irish, ancient Norse, Anglo-Saxon, Arabic, Cambrian British, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, Gaelic, German, Greek, Hebrew, Irish, Italian, Latin, Malo-Russian, Manchu, modern Greek, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Provençal, Romany, Russian, Spanish, Swabian, Swedish, Tartar, Tibetan, Turkish, and finally Welsh. Borrow was happy among these tongues; he was sorry when his book was done; but once it was done, he returned to the work of the Society with more ambition than ever.

His mystic strain had again got the better of him. He was eager to get the New Testament printed and bound and distributed, for he had some idea of going to China as a missionary. Borrow's physical stamina proved invaluable here. On all sides he was being met with opposition; the Russian Government, whose relations with China were already strained, had no desire further to offend that country, and there seemed to be some doubt of the practicability of getting the Testaments shipped out of Russia when they were ready to go. Borrow did not consider this difficulty at all, since it was the Society's worry and he could at any rate do nothing about it. But he could get the Manchu Testaments ready for shipment; and he did so by becoming translator, editor, compositor, and pressman all in one, and meanwhile he was compelled to placate Lipovzoff.

Borrow secured the paper for his printing by going all over St. Petersburg in search of bargains. He saved the society a great deal of expense in this manner — and told the committee so afterwards. He was determined to keep in the good graces of the people of Earl Street, because he was aware that his Russian job would not endure for ever, and there was the future before him. He expected to spend the immediate future in China.

But first he wanted to go back to England. His brother John had died in Mexico in November 1834, and George was anxious about his mother; he had

also kept up a correspondence with Mary Clarke of Oulton Hall, and he had a few things to say to her.

He thanked himself for having made his peace with Lipovzoff. Borrow knew that he had done his work well for the Bible Society; but unfortunately the members of the committee knew only the purpose of the work he was doing and nothing of its actual content, since they did not know the Manchu dialect. Whether Borrow's translation was good or bad they could not know save through a third person. But old Lipovzoff had proved to be a sport after all, for he recognized Borrow's worth in a note which read: "*Testifio: — Dominum Burro ab initio usque ad hoc tempus summa cum diligentia et studio in re Mantshurica laborasse, Lipovzoff.*" [1]

And so, after two years in Russia, Lavengro returned to England in September 1835.

[1] "I certify that Brother Borrow, from the time that he began until now, has studied Manchu with the greatest diligence and care. (Signed) Lipovzoff." Even when he wrote this note, Lipovzoff was no more friendly towards Lavengro than he had formerly been, and, as a matter of fact, he would probably not have written the note had he not known that his path would not again cross George's. They were jealous of each other, and that is the long and short of it. The recommendation itself is as nearly noncommital as Lipovzoff was able to make it.

CHAPTER SIX

GEORGE WAS JUST beginning to hit his full stride when he got back to England. He was now a cosmopolite; his grey hair was now compatible with his dignity, for he had known princes, he had associated with royalty; but also he had known vagabonds. He was a tall man, and his stride was long.

But his two years in Russia had not given him anything. St. Petersburg had impressed him, as had Moscow, where he had spent a few days, mostly among the gipsies; but in the veiled years he had been in other, perhaps greater cities, and these had impressed him also. Russia, as Russia, was an incident merely, although of two years' duration.

What Borrow got in those two years the British and Foreign Bible Society gave him, and this was a vent for his mysticism — that is, his superstition. George had not, upon his connexion with the Society, denied to himself the doctrines he had imbibed from William Taylor of Norwich. But he did not come to the Society simply because he believed he had

got hold of a " good thing," for he admired the rites of the Anglican Church, and while he professed an abhorrence of Roman Catholicism, he was not above sitting at meat with a prince of that Church. The only thing about which George was ever completely and without reservation sincere was learning, which he worshipped; but even so, he could not approach this as one pure in spirit, for he was jealous of learning in other people and only too acutely aware of his own limitations. But he had a manifest genius for languages, and it was this genius that, after his return from Russia, kept George in the employ of the Bible Society.

Upon his return to London George spent a few days at work on a report of his activities in Russia, and then he went up to Norwich to see his mother. He remained a short while, then visited Mrs. Clarke at Oulton Hall, who received him with open arms; but George was not presently in need of gold and he soon tired of her society, whereupon he went back to Norwich to await some word from the good people of Earl Street.

He had appealed to the Society to be sent to China, and with something approximating anxiety he looked for information to go there. But he had no news at once, and for fear that he would not be allowed to go anywhere at all Borrow wrote to Mr. Jowett that he was all ready to do anything he was required to do.

But the Society sages had already gone into action. George got a letter saying that China seemed out of the question for the time, but would Borrow consider going to Portugal to spread the true light?

George had not expected such an offer; but so eager was he to be up and doing that the same day of receiving this letter he answered by saying that he would be only too pleased to go to Portugal on behalf of the Bible Society, and that if it were feasible, he would go from there to Spain, thus leaving China as his ultimate goal. It was a most earnest letter; had there been any need for George to re-establish his position with the Society, the letter had accomplished this. As it was, he was called down to London, and there given instructions to proceed to Lisbon and Oporto for the purpose of interviewing the Society's correspondents there and of ascertaining the best means of speeding up the circulation of the Bible among the Portuguese.

George set sail for Lisbon on the 6th of November 1835, and had no sooner got there than he wished himself back in Russia. Portugal had just emerged from a state of civil war, and the conditions of the country were not likely to set a man now used to comfort on fire in favour of that country. Yet he was not going to give up his opportunity to make himself yet more useful to the Society. And he saw that, if he went about it in the right way, he would be able to

make his own job. If he could be on the pay-roll of the Society and yet govern his own actions, he would be satisfied until he could manage to be sent to China.

George knocked about over the Portuguese country-side, visiting Évora, Lisbon, Elvas, and Montemor, and became convinced that the country was in a thoroughly bad way. He distributed Testaments all about him, for which he received no gratitude, and he wrote the Society that Portugal was a bed of sin. Without asking for authority he informed the committee that he was going on to Spain — and the committee was delighted. Earl Street seemingly believed that it had found in Borrow a man sent from God. George knew this, and he wondered at it. The impression he made differed wherever he went. In Lisbon he had met some Jews who thought him to be a rabbi; strange gipsies who knew him not took him for one of themselves. Later in Spain a Catholic priest was to take him for a fellow priest. Ah well, he thought, and wondered no more.

But Borrow foresaw as early as this that one day he was to have a reputation. On the strength of this foresight he had determined to bother Dr. Bowring — now a Member of Parliament — some more, and George had written Sir John for letters of introduction to the influential people of Madrid. Bowring replied from Brussels with letters for both Lisbon and Madrid; and George, with a premature blush of

shame in his cheeks [1] stopped thinking about this too and set out for Spain.

George came across from Portugal to Spain by means of a bridge over the River Guadiana. The first thing that George did after crossing this river was to give thanks to the Lord of hosts that He had preserved His servant; that Borrow did offer these thanks is known to be true, for he himself has related it. But after crossing he forgot God and began again really to live.

It seems that two rogues — they could have been nothing else — were walking up an alley. As they were apparently what they were actually, George walked with them. These rogues spoke a dialect neither Spanish nor gipsy, but George knew this dialect, of which he not very modestly informed them. And the rogues, their tatters flapping about their legs, hurried away from Borrow and left him standing alone in the alley. He was surprised, shocked, amazed, and, indeed and in truth, not a little hurt. That is, his feelings were hurt. He had done nothing to offend the fellows, and it seemed clear to him that they had done a great deal to offend him.

[1] Perhaps not premature. George's jealousy of Bowring's colossal learning had long since grown to hatred. His principal reason for asking and accepting favours of Sir John was that by so doing, the hurts he was later to inflict, in the Appendix to *The Romany Rye* (George could hardly have contemplated the book at this time, but the Appendix was not, essentially, a part of it), would be all the more painful to Bowring.

It was not so. The rogues had talked with Borrow sufficiently to ascertain that he was at least a gipsy by choice, and then, their happiness gaining on them, they had left Lavengro to inform the other gipsies of his presence. This they soon did.

George's hurt was just beginning to sink in when the street about him was filled with gipsies, men, women, and children, all eager to question him, make him comfortable — which they could not have done in that they were themselves in circumstances so miserable that George's own standards, lowly though they were, heightened immeasurably in contrast — and give him such information as he desired if they possessed this information. To an extent they did, and it was long before these people returned to their homes and left George at the inn where he was staying.

In the evening, when they had gone, the two that Borrow had first met came round again. They proffered profuse apologies for their former unseemly conduct and made bold to hold that upon their next departure George would bid them go with God. George gave them to understand that he would; and then he settled down to talk.

The rogues thought that he would never stop. They were not to be blamed for this, for by now George's spirit was warmed. His tongue was loose, and on it must run.

At last he halted the tongue by asking the uglier of the rogues to talk awhile. The uglier of the rogues,

who deserved his name — he was a huge, muscular, uncouth man with a left arm equipped to choke a bull or wring the neck of a sow, and a right arm that was withered and useless and hung from his shoulder as a noose depends from a gallows-tree — agreed, and related his life history, which was dull and uninteresting but which contained, along with other irrelevant matter, a theory of the derivation of the gipsies and some new if unauthenticated data pertinent to one of the historically modern Pharaohs.

" There was a great king in Egypt, and his name was Pharaoh. He had numerous armies, with which he made war on all countries and conquered them all. And when he had conquered the entire world, he became sad and sorrowful; for as he delighted in war, he no longer knew on what to employ himself. At last he bethought him of making war on God; so he sent a defiance to God, daring Him to descend from the sky with His angels and contend with Pharoah and his armies; but God said: ' I will not measure My strength with that of a man.' But God was incensed against Pharoah and resolved to punish him; and He opened a hole in the side of an enormous mountain, and He raised a raging wind and drove before it Pharaoh and his armies to that hole, and the abyss received them, and the mountain closed upon them; but whosoever goes to that mountain on the night of St. John can hear Pharaoh and his armies yelling therein. And it came to pass that when Pharaoh and

his armies had disappeared, all the kings and the nations which had become subject to Egypt revolted against Egypt, which, having lost her king and her armies, was left utterly without defence; and they made war against her and took her people and drove them forth, dispersing them all over the world."

During this harangue George kept a straight face, and made mental notes against the day this theory should be given to the world. He was not come to criticize.

The rogue with the withered arm deigned to believe that his host had believed, so that he concluded: "*Apilyea gras Chai la panee Lucalee* (Our horses drink the water of the Guadiana)," which was by way of proving that the gipsies were in truth scattered over all the world. And so they were, thought George, but this was no evidence of their origin.

He did not say this. He thanked the rogues and bade them go with God, then spent the night in prayer and meditation so that he might properly meet the rise of another sun. George wanted to do the proper thing, although he considered Spain an improper country.

Spain was far worse off than Portugal. The latter country was out of war; but in Spain the fighting raged between the Carlists, in support of Don Carlos the Pretender, and the adherents of Queen Isabel II. No one was safe in the country, least of all an alien, and George, upon his arrival in Madrid late in

January 1836, advised himself, courageous though he was, to get some insurance of protection.

The Spanish Prime Minister was the man for him. The premier was Juan Alvarez y Mendizábal, a Jew turned Christian, who ruled the fortunes of Spain with a practically unlimited power, and George made several fruitless attempts to see him. He then turned to the Honourable George Villiers, the British Minister at Madrid, for assistance. Villiers got Borrow an audience with Mendizábal, before whom Lavengro appeared on the morning of the 7th of February.

Mendizábal was a much older man than Borrow; he was about fifty years of age, but in appearance he was almost a caricature of George, for his hair was quite grey, and he was taller than the young man so earnestly talking before him.

Borrow got no satisfaction from the premier. Mendizábal insisted that the New Testament was an improper book and refused George permission to print it — without notes — in Spain, at least until the Carlists had been beaten. Neither was he given permission to distribute the Testament in the Catalan dialect. He argued with Mendizábal for an hour, and then left, with a more humble opinion of himself. He had not expected a rebuff from a man he considered smaller in heart than himself.

The opinion did not colour his next letter to the Bible Society. He wrote a very optimistic report, and the reply left his future movements in his own hands.

George had been striving after just this. He was now satisfied that the time was come for him to begin his good work; he had a clear field, encouragement from his backers, and no little ability. Spain was in great need of the true light, and Borrow knew in his own mind that he plainly must do what he had set out to do.

And yet George was not a fanatic in so far as he dealt in and with religion. He had a purpose which was good and something in back of it which was bad. Actually Borrow had no manner of use for the people of Spain: had all of them died and gone to hell, it wouldn't have mattered to him; but he had his chance, and he must make the most of it.

He thought he saw a way when Mendizábal resigned, in March 1836. Borrow sped from Madrid to London to confer with the Society; and the beginning of 1837 found him back in Spain, this time prepared to go ahead with the distribution of the Testament regardless of the Government.

In Russia he had not thought about distribution at all: his problem there was translating and printing. He now had both printing and distribution to worry about, but the printing itself proved no worry at all. The big problem was to get people to buy.

In Seville, Córdoba, and Salamanca George enlisted the support of the gipsies as missionaries. They were eager to aid him, since they considered him a gipsy also; but Borrow soon discovered that they were

considerably in his way. Occasionally they got rid of a Bible, but it was more trouble getting rid of Bibles in this way than if he had gone out as a salesman himself.

So in Salamanca George conceived a brilliant idea. Big business was not yet in control of the earth, and advertising was not even in its infancy, yet Don Jorge discovered it and proceeded to use it.

In Salamanca there was a bookseller, named Blanco, who had a plethora of earthly success and a surfeit of respectability. But he knew in his own mind that heaven was not for him, and when George came round to show him the way, he was overwhelmed with gratitude. George showed Blanco a copy of the New Testament, and Blanco was convinced. A number of New Testaments were deposited in his bookshop. Blanco eyed them carefully, and presently submitted that he did not see how he was going to sell them at a profit. So George's idea was born.

Blanco had a printing-press, he knew. He spoke to the bookseller about this, and shortly they lugged the press out of the back room, got together reams of paper and some gaudy ink, and ran off an advertisement assuring you that the British and Foreign Bible Society was the only organization capable of sending God's Word off as it deserved; and further it assured you that Borrow was the one agent of the Bible Society whose knowledge of Jehovah's intentions permitted of reference to these intentions.

As for the New Testament, this was a document containing all information necessary to a happy and full life both here and hereafter. With it, there was nothing that might not be accomplished; without it, life on earth might by some fluke be passable, but salvation was impossible. This little book sold for a small sum and was to be obtained at Blanco the bookseller's or through the authorized agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Would you do without it? Could you, knowing as you did your shortcomings, do without it? Should you, in duty to yourself and your loved ones, do without it? The only answer, my friends, is *no*.

Blanco and Don Jorge looked these bulls over after they were run off, and anon joined a mutual admiration society. This advertisement was placed in the official bulletin of Salamanca, and it was struck off as a bill and stuck up on walls and posts throughout the city. It was better than a circus. The spirit of Rotary had begun to materialize.

But while advertising the Scriptures was a success as a business venture, the hot water in which Don Jorge had later to swim was nearing the boiling-point. His path and that of Lieutenant Graydon, now working in another part of the Peninsula, had not yet crossed, but they were soon to do so with no favour to either of them.

Lieutenant Graydon was not, strictly, in the employ of the Bible Society. He was of independent

means; he believed in the ultimate glory of God and the doctrine of Christ crucified. And he had come to Spain to give utterance to this doctrine.

Borrow had up to now discounted Graydon and his work. He knew the man by reputation for a fanatic, but he knew nothing about him really, and, for that matter, Borrow himself had tried and was still trying to build up in the minds of his friends an impression of absolute sincerity. As he knew little of Graydon's sincerity, he had decided not to bother about the man and his actions in the least.

But a short while after Don Jorge and Blanco had got their heads together, something occurred to make Borrow sit up and take notice. When Graydon saw how Don Jorge was getting rid of the Word through handbills and journal advertisements, he went into communion with the Holy Spirit and decided to go Borrow one better.

Graydon was then in Valencia, and Valencia seemed to be in need of excitement, which proper advertising could not but cause. So advertise Graydon did — but not as a device for making money. He was going to give away the Word for the asking.

This decision was all that was necessary to precipitate trouble. The Government issued an order prohibiting the distribution of the Bible in Valencia, and Graydon got the thunder of the Society on his head. He tried to edge out of the mess by saying that he was a free agent and therefore not responsible to

the Society; but the committee soon convinced this sly fellow that it was responsible for him, and George in his own section of Spain had ample cause to gloat. But not for long, as the Government order cut in on his own work, to accomplish which he must perforce defy the law. Graydon then laughed above his own sorrow.

This now meant that there was no longer any chance of an amicable arrangement between Borrow and Graydon. Each was out to flay the other, and if the good work suffered, it was just too bad.

But George for the moment kept his head. He was not in proximity to Graydon, for one thing; and, for another, his job, although not indispensable, was most important. He had not yet shown the world what he was able to do; he had been thwarted as a maker of literature, and there he was a failure (as he sincerely believed, for the time, and this sincerity at least is not open to question), so that now he must not fail.

Graydon himself had retained but little of his original sense. What foresight he had was now obscured by a hatred for Borrow, not as a personality, for they had never met, but for what he represented, in that he was trespassing upon territory which Graydon believed to be rightfully his own. So he set about to slip a noose round poor George's neck.

In 1835, in Gibraltar, Graydon had been associated with the Rev. Mr. Rule, of the Wesleyan

Methodist Society, and they had got along very well together. Graydon now went to Rule with his sad story, and between them these pretty boys contrived a plot to send Borrow packing from Spain to leave them a clear field.

They got hold of a priest, Don Pascual Marin by name, and using promises of glory and inspiring in him hopes of wealth, persuaded him to leave the Church. This was a tedious process, and it is not impossible that Rule, who was a stony fellow, employed a hypnotic scheme in swinging Marin in with him and Graydon. To themselves Marin could be of no use, save for the trouble he was going to cause Don Jorge.

After some rehearsal Marin was sent from Valencia to Borrow in Madrid, and in so doing the Rev. Mr. Rule presumed unnaturally on his acquaintance with Borrow. He knew George only slightly and had not informed him ahead of time that Marin was coming; but this, of course, was a part of the nefarious plot.

George was in duty bound to receive Marin, because he had deserted Holy Church and was come with a message to the oppressed people of Spain. Yet he wrote to the Society at London complaining that he had been placed in an unfortunate situation.

Graydon's intent was by now in part accomplished, because George was in danger of his life. The Government, if it knew of the case — it could not

fail to learn in time — would not permit of Borrow's harbouring a deserter from Rome; the priests themselves would be after Don Jorge; and the people, in whom his only trust was, would string him up to a gooseberry bush.

So George, after due thought, sent Marin scooting along the highway with five hundred reales in his pocket and bade him preach the Gospel to all men. He did not mind the loss of the reales, because he had known intuitively that Rule and Graydon were up to mischief and he had seen that, once Marin had money in his jeans, he would return to the sanctuary of Mother Church. Marin did this, thus knocking a hole in George's finances and taking the wind out of the sails of Graydon and Rule. Don Jorge could not afford to mind, for otherwise he would probably have had his throat cut; and as he knew that Graydon and Rule had wished to compromise him, he wrote to the latter that the incident, he hoped, would " tend to a certain extent to sober down the desire for what is called at home *smart things*, many of which terminate in a manner very different from the original expectations of the parties concerned."

Meantime George's work was going none too well. With the departure of Marin he put Graydon out of his mind; he concentrated on the distribution of the Gitano and Basque Gospels that he had had printed. He knew he was under constant surveillance. . . .

At last George saw the way out. So long as the authorities were so eager to arrest him, he would permit himself to be arrested, go to jail, and then proceed to make things hot for Spain by the intervention of the military forces of Great Britain and Ireland.

Borrow now sold the Scriptures openly in the streets of Madrid. He was waiting for the great day. The great day arrived the first of May 1838.

The next morning George awaked to find himself in the Cárcel de la Corte. Of course he knew how he had got there, because he had been thrown in the day before while he was sober and as sane as ever he could expect himself to be. But now George was worried about getting out, because jail was altogether different from what he had imagined it to be.

He schemed schemes with the élite among the prisoners; and all the time the wheels were buzzing, round and round, in his head. He wanted to get out. He would have to pull a few strings. He would have to be a politician, and the Lord of hosts knew that Borrow abhorred politicians. Sir John Bowring was a politician.

George must get out; the men in jail with him were none too clean; there were no high and mighty among them as there were later to be in the federal prisons of the United States of America; these lads were real jail-birds.

Actually — Borrow would not have enjoyed hearing it said — his influence with that British am-

bassadorial plenipotentiary Sir George Villiers prevented his being treated as an ordinary prisoner. He was an ordinary prisoner, and on the books he rated no higher than the commonest malefactor; but in fact he was allowed a separate cell, separate food, and the right to retain his individuality.

This hurt poor George's feelings. He wanted to build a case against the Spanish Government; he wanted to be mistreated so that he would have copy for his forthcoming book; he wanted to be persecuted, not so that he could revel in persecution, but so that he would have a neat little reputation. All about how he was wronged in a Spanish hell-hole.

Lavengro was in prison exactly twelve days. In his books these twelve days grow to several weeks. Poor fellow, how he must have suffered!

Naturally the Cárcel de la Corte was not a nice place to be in. It was a prison, and it served the purposes of one. A man in a Spanish prison in 1838 might just as well have been in hell. That is, an ordinary man. . . . George was a lucky fellow in that he was not precisely ordinary, for had he been, he would not have been in the Cárcel de la Corte in 1838 or any other year, and so could not have been either ill or well treated.

Borrow was supposed to pay for the comfortable quarters he was assigned, but the fact remains that these quarters were permitted him. Borrow wrote a note to a Mr. Southern that he needed help; and Mr.

Southern came to the Cárcel de la Corte, where he found George eating a fine meal and surrounded by friends and furniture.

Just the same, a great deal was made of the *affaire Borrow,* and George thanked the Lord of hosts for the benevolence of his native land and its ambassadorial plenipotentiaries. He had a right thus to thank the God in whom he was uncertain he believed, since he had only twelve days of confinement . . . but immediately he was released, he was sorry.

There had been but twelve days of travail and suffering: there should have been ten weeks at least. For in the Cárcel de la Corte Borrow had jotted down his observations of the other prisoners, whom he had known only slightly, but who had been so forward in their actions that these could not but have been noted by a student. And George was, after all, a student, not a scholar — he wanted very much to be a scholar, but he lacked the scholastic impulse, or, better, the ability to realize it, did he possess it. But now, alas! his opportunity to study the criminals of Spain at first hand was gone.

He shed a few tears over this at first, and then he went on to something better. He was latterly glad: the prisoners would doubtless have killed him had they been able to get at him. A pair of ruffians not long since had been about to blow out Borrow's brains.

Forgetting the terror of the incident, it was al-

most amusing. George and his man had stayed in a place called Lugo for about a week when Borrow decided it was time to push on. Bandits were thick in that part of the country and it was inadvisable to travel alone; but travel George must and there were no crowds going his way.

So George, the horses, and his man, Antonio, set out, with George in the lead. He liked being in the lead. It made him feel that he was a big man.

George was walking along the road, his horse with him, when on a sudden, from out the bowels of the earth, arose two banditti, one with a carbine, the other with a growl. George said his prayers and hoped that his body would be found and shipped to England; he was ready to give himself over to the villains, but a horse saved him.

Antonio was far behind, bringing up the rear from a great distance, but his horse had been sent on ahead. The banditti heard and assumed that George had company, which proved most fortunate for George.

He offered up thanks that his life had been saved, then kicked Antonio's horse in the ribs for not arriving sooner on the scene. He now guffawed loudly in remembrance, and in joy at his release; but his brow clouded once more at an evil thought. It was that fellow Graydon again.

News of the *affaire Borrow* had come to Valencia, but its outcome was obvious, and while Borrow

was yet in prison, Graydon employed measures even more serious than he had formerly used as a means of causing Borrow to lose his job. The lieutenant had no job to lose, and as he was already in the evil graces of the Bible Society, he knew that he could not bring much more harm upon himself. So that at last he believed he had found a way to make Don Jorge give up in disgust.

Graydon composed an advertisement that he knew would give offence to the Government and the people also and had it published with the hope that its effect on Borrow would justify the expense. The advertisement ran:

" The Individual in question most earnestly calls the greatest attention of each member of the great Spanish Family to this *divine* Book, in order that *through it* he may learn the chief cause, if not the *sole one,* of all his terrible afflictions and of his *only* remedy, as it is so clearly manifested in the Holy Scripture. . . . A detestable system of superstition and fanaticism, *only greedy for money,* and not so either of the temporal or eternal felicity of man, has prevailed in Spain (as also in other Nations) during several Centuries, by the *absolute* exclusion of the true knowledge of the Great God and last Judge of Mankind: and thus it has been plunged into the most frightful calamities. There was a time in which precisely the same was read in the then *very little* Kingdom of England, but at length Her Sons recognizing

their imperative *Duty* towards God and their Neighbour, as also their unquestionable rights, and that since the world exists it has never been possible to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, they destroyed the system and at the price of their blood chose the Bible. Oh that the unprejudiced and enlightened inhabitants not only of Malaga and of so many other cities, but of all Spain, would follow so good an example."

This is the official translation, and in the original it was even more startling; it was about to undo all the work that Borrow had done for the Almighty. George, after being informed of this atrocity, also entered into communion with the Holy Spirit, and wrote to the Society: ". . . Mr. Graydon must leave Spain, or the Bible Society must publicly disavow that his proceedings receive their encouragement, unless they wish to see the Sacred Book, which it is their object to distribute, brought into universal odium and contempt. . . . I have never had any other opinion of Mr. Graydon than that he is insane — insane as the person who for the sake of warming his hands would set a street on fire."

Then, while the iron was still in the fire, a few days later he wrote to London again, enclosing a letter to himself from the Rev. Mr. Rule, which said in part: " Our worthy brother Graydon is, I suppose, in Granada. I overtook him in Cartagena, endured the process of osculation, saw him without rhime or

reason wrangle with and publicly insult our Consul there. Had his company in the steamer to Almeria, much to my discomfort. Never was a man fuller of love or impudence, compounded in the most provoking manner. In Malaga, just as we were to part, he broke out into a strain highly disagreeable, and I therefore thought it a convenient occasion to tell him that I should have no more to do with him. I left him dancing and raving like an energumen."

Rule in this letter was salving George's feelings, because on being confronted by the Society with the missive he repudiated it and said had he known it would appear before the Society, he would not have written it. He accused George of double-dealing and insisted that Graydon was a good man with good intentions.

The Bible Society took no action, but the Malagan advertisement had angered the Spanish Government. It was now resolved to end all the activities of the Bible Society in Spain. George saw that, to save his neck, something must be done. He did it.

The Archbishop of Toledo, primate of Spain, had nothing in common with Borrow; in fact, they hated each other. But while George was still in the Cárcel de la Corte, and unable to go anywhere, the venerable Archbishop had invited Borrow to visit him, by way of salting Borrow's wounds. Later Don Jorge surprised the Archbishop by accepting the invitation; and at the interview he received the Arch-

bishop's kiss. He was then safe from the Spanish officials at least — but the Society permitted Graydon to remain in Spain.[2]

George had now a comparatively free hand once more. He went on to Córdoba, where he struck up an acquaintance with an old priest. The old man spent most of his time in reading and prayer, and one day George, to discover what the priest read, borrowed the old fellow's book and began to turn its pages.

"You will hardly derive much information from that book, Don Jorge," said the priest, "you cannot understand it, for it is not written in English."

"Nor in Spanish," said George. "But with respect to understanding the book, I cannot see what difficulty there can be in a thing so simple; it is only the Roman breviary written in the Latin tongue."

"Do the English understand the Latin? *Vaya!* Who would have thought it possible for the Lutherans to understand the language of the Church! *Vaya!* The longer one lives, the more one learns."

"How old may your reverence be?" asked George.

"I am eighty years, Don Jorge; eighty years, and somewhat more. . . . I have got a small library at

[2] The Church was not, directly, a controlling force in the Spanish political system, but here its influence was made manifest. No orders were published apropos of George's interview with the Archbishop: an efficient grape-vine telegraph precluded the need for this.

home, Don Jorge, which consists of all the volumes of the Fathers I have been able to pick up, and I find the perusal of them a source of great amusement and comfort. Should these dark days pass by, Don Jorge, and you should be in these parts, I hope you will look in upon me, and I will show you my little library of the Fathers, and likewise my dovecot, where I rear numerous broods of pigeons, which are also a source of much solace and at the same time of profit."

"I suppose by your dovecot you mean your parish, and by rearing broods of pigeons, you allude to the care you take of the souls of your people, instilling therein the fear of God and obedience to His revealed law, which occupation must of course afford you much solace and spiritual profit."

The old man replied: "I was not speaking metaphorically, Don Jorge; and by rearing doves I mean neither more nor less than that I supply the market of Córdoba with pigeons, and occasionally that of Seville; for my birds are very celebrated, and plumper or fatter flesh than theirs I believe cannot be found in the whole kingdom. Should you come to my village, you will doubtless taste them, Don Jorge, at the *venta* where you will put up, for I suffer no dovecots but my own within my district. With respect to the souls of my parishioners, I trust to do my duty — I trust I do, as far as in my power lies. I always took great pleasure in these spiritual matters, and it was on that

account that I attached myself to the Santa Casa of Córdoba, the duties of which I assisted to perform for a long period."

George looked startled. "Your reverence has been an inquisitor?" he exclaimed.

"From my thirtieth year until the time of the suppression of the Holy Office in these afflicted kingdoms."

"You both surprise and delight me," said George. "Nothing could have afforded me greater pleasure than to find myself conversing with a father formerly attached to the holy house of Córdoba."

Well, George knew what he was driving at; he was, by God, going to get the old man to talk. And the old man was going to talk because George had completely disarmed him. He looked steadily at Don Jorge for a moment, then said: "I understand you. I have long seen that you are one of us. You are a learned and holy man, and though you think fit to call yourself a Lutheran and an Englishman, I have dived into your real condition. No Lutheran would take the interest in Church matters which you do, and with respect to your being an Englishman, none of that nation can speak Castilian, much less Latin. I believe you to be one of us — a missionary priest — and I am especially confirmed in that idea by your frequent conversations and interviews with the *gitanos;* you appear to be labouring among them. Be, however, on your guard, Don Jorge, trust not to Egyptian faith;

they are evil penitents, whom I like not. I should not advise you to trust them."

George allowed himself a furtive grin. He knew the gipsies from Alpha to Omega; but he replied: "I do not intend, especially with money. But to return to more important matters: of what crimes did this holy house of Córdoba take cognizance?"

"You are of course aware of the matters on which the Holy Office exercises its functions? I need scarcely mention sorcery, Judaism, and certain carnal misdemeanours."

"With respect to sorcery," said George, "what is your opinion of it? Is there in reality such a crime?"

"How should I know? The Church has power, Don Jorge, or, at least, it had power, to punish for anything, real or unreal; and as it was necessary to punish in order to prove that it had the power of punishing, of what consequence whether it punished for sorcery or any other crime?"

"Did many cases of sorcery occur within your own sphere of knowledge?"

"One or two, Don Jorge; they were by no means frequent. The last that I remember was a case which occurred at a convent in Seville: a certain nun was in the habit of flying through the windows and about the garden over the tops of the orange-trees; declarations of various witnesses were taken, and the process was arranged with much formality; the fact, I be-

lieve, was satisfactorily proved; of one thing I am certain, that the nun was punished."

"Were you troubled with much Judaism in these parts?"

"Wooh! Nothing gave so much trouble to the Santa Casa as this same Judaism. Its shoots and ramifications are numerous, not only in these parts, but in all Spain; and it is singular enough that, even among the priesthood, instances of Judaism of both kinds were continually coming to our knowledge, which it was of course our duty to punish."

Don Jorge demanded: "Is there more than one species of Judaism?"

"I have always arranged Judaism under two heads, the black and the white: by the black I mean the observance of the law of Moses in preference to the precepts of the Church; then there is the white Judaism, which includes all kinds of heresy, such as Lutheranism, freemasonry, and the like."

"I can easily conceive," said Borrow, "that many of the priesthood favoured the principles of the Reformation and that the minds of not a few had been led astray by the deceitful lights of modern philosophy, but it is almost inconceivable to me that there should be Jews among the priesthood who follow in secret the rites and observances of the old law, though I confess I have been assured of the fact ere now."

"Plenty of Judaism amongst the priesthood,

whether of the black or white species; no lack of it, I assure you, Don Jorge. I remember once searching the house of an ecclesiastic who was accused of the black Judaism, and after much investigation we discovered beneath the floor a wooden chest, in which was a small shrine of silver, enclosing three books in black hogskin, which, on being opened, were found to be books of Jewish devotion, written in Hebrew characters, and of great antiquity; and on being questioned, the culprit made no secret of his guilt, but rather gloried in it, saying that there was no God but one, and denouncing the adoration of Maria Santissima as rank idolatry."

George hesitated, then said: "And, between ourselves, what is your own opinion of the adoration of this same Maria Santissima?"

"What is my opinion? How should I know? But I will tell you; I think, on consideration, that it is right and proper; why not? Let anyone pay a visit to my church and look at her as she stands there, *tan bonita, tan guapita*—so well dressed and so genteel—with such pretty colours, such red and white, and he would scarcely ask me why Maria Santissima should not be adored. Moreover, *Don Jorgito mío,* this is a Church matter, and forms an important part of the Church system."

"And now, with respect to carnal misdemeanours. Did you take much cognizance of them?"

"Among the laity, not much; we, however,

kept a vigilant eye upon our own body, but, on the whole, were rather tolerant in these matters, knowing that the infirmities of human natures are very great indeed; we rarely punished, save in cases where the glory of the Church and loyalty to Maria Santissima made punishment absolutely imperative."

"And what cases might those be?" asked George.

"I speak of the desecration of dovecots, Don Jorge, and the introduction therein of strange flesh, for purposes neither seemly nor convenient."

"Your reverence will excuse me for not yet perfectly understanding."

"I mean, Don Jorge, certain acts of flagitiousness practised by the clergy in lone and remote *palomares,* in olive grounds and gardens; actions denounced, I believe, by the holy Pablo in his first letter to Pope Sixtus. You understand me now, Don Jorge, for you are learned in Church matters."

"I think I understand you," said George, departing. His conversation with the old man had been very informative, but Borrow suddenly remembered that he should not be looking for information. He had the whole of Spain to convert, and there was more to it than Córdoba.

But George had finally got what he wanted. He had often wondered whether it was possible for a man to be Catholic and intelligent at the same time; he had wondered whether or not a man could be sincere and remain a priest. He was at last certain.

He did not ponder the old priest's intelligence at all. It was not, thought George, a subject worth pondering. But there was, now, that little matter of sincerity. Formerly the gates had been closed to Don Jorge concerning this. It was so easy for one to be a hypocrite, as he well knew. Not all people were guileless.

But the old priest so obviously was. He had been taken in from the start. Borrow had ascertained his attitude on what George considered the vital issues of Romanism: inquisition and the adoration of the Virgin. The old man had cast the scales from Borrow's eyes.

George was not thenceforward completely a hypocrite. All Spain, as far as he was concerned, could still go to the dogs, and he would not go too far out of the way to lift a people out of Catholicism. But his books were still to be written, and although he did not think much about them then, he would not find it hard to switch the Pope with a pen when the time was ripe for him to do so.

And there was the whole of Spain to convert! Impossible. " Catch 'em while they're young," people said. But George must go on. He no longer had any business in this city.

After leaving Córdoba, which he had found very unexciting, George deplored the loss of his tilts with Graydon. George still liked Spain, but his heart had

never been in his work, and when it turned out to be plain work, as it was now, he wished for something better.

For more than a year he wandered about Spain, peddling the Bible, until at last his disgust became so great that he determined to create some excitement of his own.

He had maintained a correspondence with Mrs. Clarke; and through Mrs. Clarke he saw a way to martyrdom.

In the summer of 1839 Borrow set up his headquarters in Seville, which was a logical point of distribution. But he had another reason, and this was that he had found a house there which would serve his purpose admirably. This house was No. 7 Plazauela de la Pila Seca.

To No. 7 Plazauela de la Pila Seca Borrow called, with no apparent reason, Mrs. Clarke from England. For here was the way to martyrdom.

Mrs. Clarke did not hesitate at all about coming. She brought her daughter, Henrietta, with her, and together they lived with Borrow during the remainder of his stay in Spain.

George's point in this was that in so doing he would bring upon his head both the disapproval of the authorities and the displeasure of the people of Seville. Inasmuch as he purported to be a spreader of the Gospel and a preceptor of unimpeachable honour, he assumed that an ostensible liaison with

Mrs. Clarke could not but bring him either persecution or assassination.

But there was no persecution. The Spaniards chose not to give Borrow this satisfaction. There was a minute breath of scandal — but there was no martyrdom.

George hung on for a few months, hoping for the best; but his hopes were vain. In April 1840 he made his last departure from Spain; he was thoroughly disgusted.

Mrs. Clarke went with him.

CHAPTER SEVEN

On the 23rd of April 1840, at St. Peter's Church in Cornhill, George Henry Borrow and Mary Clarke were married. He was out of a job: the Bible Society kept him in uncertainty for a few weeks and then lost contact with him; the committee had no desire to send him to the Orient: he was a trouble-maker; look at poor Graydon, toiling without pay only to be disparaged by a man whose living was Christianity.

But George did not have to worry, because his wife had some money, and he was likely to have some. He knew that he had brought at least one book with him out of Spain.

In November 1840 George met Glorious John Murray of Albemarle Street for the first time. His call on Murray fifteen years before was fruitless; but it turned out that these years had been well worth the waiting. Don Jorge had something to sell after this time, and Glorious John was in the market.

George found himself once more in the writing-

business through the good offices of Richard Ford, a critic and author who had knocked about Spain for several years on horseback and later written a book about it. Ford persuaded George to do *The Zincali; or, An Account of the Gipsies in Spain.* Murray brought this book out in 1841, and it sold well. It was not a great book; its pretensions to scholastic attainment have since been hooted to the skies; but it was novel and interesting and quite vividly descriptive of the Spanish gipsies, in which it succeeded in its intention.

The reception of *The Zincali* spurred Borrow on to greater effort, and he began work on *The Bible in Spain.* The *Bible* sold better than the first book from the start. England at that time was politically stirred over the Roman Catholic question; and George in the *Bible* gave England to understand that he hated Catholicism with a fervour and intensity incomparable. The *Bible* was published in 1842; by 1843 the sales were enormous as compared with other books published contemporaneously. The royalties rolled in. His wife didn't have to support him any more. He was a made man.

But the *Bible* was, aside from the appeal to bigotry with which George had seen fit to inflate it, a fine piece of writing. It was literature, and it was the only literature George Borrow was ever to write. It was full of lies: even his itinerary in the Peninsular was falsified; but with the exception of " love inter-

est " it possessed every element calculated to appeal to the popular mind.

The enthusiastic reception of *The Bible in Spain* caused Don Jorge and Glorious John to think that Borrow's autobiography would be welcomed, so that George sat him down to go to work on this.

Richard Ford had already seen that the *Bible* was considerably less than gospel, and he wrote to a friend about Borrow: " His biography will be passing strange if he tells the *whole* truth." But it would seem that Ford took it for granted that brother Borrow would tell *some* of the truth.

For nine consecutive years George worked on the story of his life, and at the end of that time he had not got so far as his thirtieth year. Even so, he had not told a straight story, and he had changed the title of the book several times. It was first advertised as " Life: A Drama " in the periodicals of the day, and most of the advertising was published before the book itself was completed.

But in the year 1851 there appeared before the British public *Lavengro: The Scholar — The Gipsy — The Priest,* by George Borrow, and published by John Murray [1] at London. Then George sat back to count the incoming shekels. But he had not taken cognizance of the passage of time.

[1] John Murray III, son of " Glorious " John Murray, who had died in 1843.

The critics seized *Lavengro* with avidity and hounded it to death. They were sorely disappointed in the book, the *Bible* nine years previously having led them to expect that anything from Borrow's pen would be worth reading.

Borrow read conspiracy against himself in both the cool and the heated reviews. He was the egotist, the believer in self, the knower of all things; so he knew that *Lavengro* was a great book, written by a great man. He swore a curse of eternal hatred upon the reviewing fraternity, and said to himself that he would show the world what he could do in vengeance and retribution.

George looked at the situation from every possible angle and exhausted six years in so doing. He was occasionally in hot water with John Murray, who was sickening of Borrow's pettishness. For the book on which Don Jorge was now working would not only repay the critics who had reviewed *Lavengro* adversely, but also settle the hash of John Bowring. Also, George was come to the conclusion that he would give the critics, the public, and the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church some of their own miserable medicine. So, in 1857, John Murray brought out *The Romany Rye;* and George Henry Borrow's goose was inevitably cooked.

Murray had written, before the publication of this book:

"My dear Borrow,—I have read with care the MS. of *The Romany Rye* and have pondered anxiously over it; and in what I am about to write I think I may fairly claim the privilege of a friend deeply interested in you personally, as well as in your reputation as author, and by no means insensible to the abilities displayed in your various works. It is my firm conviction then, that you will incur the certainty of failure and run the risque of injuring your literary fame by publishing the MS. as it stands. Very large omissions seem to me . . . absolutely indispensable. That *Lavengro* would have profited by curtailment, I stated before publication. The result has verified my anticipations, and in the present instance I feel compelled to make it the condition of publication. You can well imagine that it is not to my *interest* to shorten the book from two volumes to one unless there were really good cause.

"*Lavengro* clearly has not been successful. Let us not then risque the chance of another failure, but try to avoid the rock upon which we then split. You have so great store of interesting matter in your mind and in your notes, that I cannot but feel it to be a pity that you should harp always on one string, as it were. It seems to me that you have dwelt too long on English ground in this new work, and have resuscitated some characters of the former book . . . whom your readers would have been better pleased to have left behind. Why should you not introduce us rather

to those novel scenes of Moscovite and Hungarian life respecting which I have heard you drop so many stimulating allusions. Do not, I pray, take offence at what I have written. It is difficult and even painful for me to assume the office of critic, and this is one of the reasons why this note has lingered so long in my desk. Fortunately, in the advice I am tendering I am supported by others of better literary judgment than myself, and who have also deep regard for you. I will specify below some of the passages which I would point out for omission. — With best remembrances, I remain," etc., "John Murray."

George immediately got out paper and pen and drafted a letter, which he caused to be signed by his wife, thinking thus to make doubly certain and plain his importance to John. The letter runs:

"Dear Mr. Murray, — We have received your letters. In the first place I beg leave to say something on a very principal point. You talk about *conditions* of publishing. Mr. Borrow has not the slightest wish to publish the book. The MS. was left with you because you wished to see it, and when left, you were particularly requested not to let it pass out of your own hands. But it seems you have shown it to various individuals [2] whose opinions you repeat. What those

[2] Even had not the draft in Borrow's writing of this letter been discovered, the employment of the word *individual* — among his favourite expressions — is enough to distinguish his authorship.

opinions are worth may be gathered from the following fact.

" The book is one of the most learned works ever written; yet in the summary of the opinions which you give, not one single allusion is made to the learning which pervades the book, no more than if it contained none at all. It is treated just as if all the philological and historical facts were mere inventions, and the book a common novel. . . .

" With regard to *Lavengro,* it is necessary to observe that if ever a book experienced infamous and undeserved treatment it was that book. It was attacked in every form that envy and malice could suggest, on account of Mr. Borrow's acquirements and the success of *The Bible in Spain,* and it was deserted by those whose duty it was, in some degree to have protected it. No attempt was ever made to refute the vile calumny that it was a book got up against the Popish agitations of '51. It was written years previous to that period — a fact of which none is better aware than the Publisher. Is that calumny to be still permitted to go unanswered?

" If these suggestions are attended to, well and good; if not, Mr. Borrow can bide his time. He is independent of the public and of everybody. Say no more on that Russian Subject. Mr. Borrow has had quite enough of the press. If he wrote a book on Russia, it would be said to be like *The Bible in Spain,* or it would be said to be *un*like *The Bible in Spain,* and

would be blamed in either case. He has written a book in connection with England such as no other body could have written, and he now rests from his labours. He has found England an ungrateful country. It owes much to him, and he owes nothing to it. If he had been a low ignorant impostor, like a person he could name, he would have been employed and honoured. — I remain," etc.,

"Mary Borrow."

Poor George. He was unable to forget Bowring, who had very likely never in his life committed any wrong. And certainly George did not mean what he had said about publishing the book, for at last he cajoled Murray into bringing out *The Romany Rye* with only a few changes, and the most horrible appendix ever seen in print. It was really obnoxious; and had not Bowring been the gentleman he was, he could have brought a bill for libel against Borrow and won the suit. But *The Romany Rye* and its appendix were practically ignored, and George was still on his endless quest.

He had not found satisfaction in writing, mainly because he had not given satisfaction; but he still felt that there was something left for him to do.

Life at Oulton Hall with his wife and Henrietta was not intolerable: he bore it; but he felt that once again a period of vagabondage was due. He had lost his youth . . . still . . .

In August 1854, while George was still thinking up invective for his philippic against Bowring, he took his wife and daughter to Wales. It was to be a walking-tour, and the less walking he did with the women, the better for himself.

Lavengro got his first, and only enduring, impression of Wales when he had been there only a short while; this was, simply, that Wales was a holiday place for people with an ability to appreciate a real holiday.

It so happened that one morning on a lonely stroll he encountered a cripple with a fiddle and a red head. He was alone also; George accosted him.

"Good-morning to you," said Lavengro.

"A good-morning to your hanner, a merry afternoon, and a roaring joyous evening — that is the worst luck I wish to ye." The red-head grinned and showed his teeth.

"Are you a native of these parts?" asked George, with his customary indifference to the amenities and the disposition of other people.

"Not exactly, your hanner — I am a native of the city of Dublin, or, what's the same thing, the village of Donnybrook, which is close by it."

"A celebrated place," offered Borrow.

"Your hanner may say that; all the world has heard of Donnybrook, owing to the humours of its fair. Many is the merry tune I have played to the boys at that fair."

"You are a professor of music, I suppose?"

" And not a very bad one, as your hanner will say if you will allow me to play you a tune."

George was now living the life of a good Christian-Protestant — and he thought of a number which the Orangemen had used to play. He said: " Can you play ' Croppies Lie Down ' ? "

" I cannot, your hanner; my fingers never learned to play such a blackguard tune; but if ye wish to hear ' Croppies Get Up,' I can oblige ye."

" You are a Roman Catholic, I suppose? "

" I am nat, your hanner — I am a Catholic to the backbone, just like my father before me. Come, your hanner, shall I play ' Croppies Get Up ' ? "

" No; it's a tune that doesn't please my ears." It is likely that the tune *did* please Borrow's ears; but of course its significance was to him unbearable, intolerable, and taboo." If, however, you choose to play ' Croppies Lie Down,' I'll give you a shilling."

" Your hanner will give me a shilling? "

" Yes, if you play ' Croppies Lie Down,' I'll give you a shilling: but you know you cannot play it, your fingers never learned the tune."

" They never did, your hanner; but they have heard it played of ould by the blackguard Orange fiddlers of Dublin on the first of July, when the Protestant boys used to walk round Willie's statue on College Green — so if your hanner gives me the shilling, they may perhaps bring out something like it."

" Very good," said Lavengro; " begin! "

" But, your hanner, what shall we do for the words? Though my fingers may remember the tune, my tongue does not remember the words — that is, unless — "

Borrow grinned. " — I give you another shilling; but never mind you the words; I know the words and will repeat them."

" And your hanner will give me a shilling? "

" If you play the tune," said Borrow.

" Hanner bright, your hanner? "

" Honour bright," said Borrow.

This seemed satisfactory to the fiddler, who shouldered his instrument and drew the bow across it after the manner of a virtuoso. He then played " Croppies Lie Down " as though he had in the past played it frequently. Borrow remarked this; he said: " Have you been an Orange fiddler? " and the cripple replied to Borrow's surprise that he had.

He said: " I have, your hanner. And now as your hanner has behaved like a gentleman to me, I will tell ye all my history. I was born in the city of Dublin — that is, in the village of Donnybrook, as I told your hanner before. It was to the trade of bricklaying I was bred, and bricklaying I followed till at last, getting my leg smashed, not by falling off the ladder, but by a row in the fair, I was obliged to give it up, for how could I run up the ladder with a patten on my foot, which they put on to make my broken leg as

long as the other? Well, your hanner, being obliged to give up my bricklaying, I took to fiddling, to which I had always a natural inclination, and played about the streets, and at fairs, and wakes, and weddings. At length some Orangemen, getting acquainted with me and liking my style of playing, invited me to their lodge, where they gave me to drink and told me that if I would change my religion and join them, and play their tunes, they would make it answer my purpose. Well, your hanner, without much stickling I gave up my popery, joined the Orange lodge, learned the Orange tunes, and became a regular Protestant boy; and truly the Orangemen kept their word and made it answer my purpose. Oh the meat and drink I got, and the money I made by playing at the Orange lodges and before the processions when the Orangemen paraded the streets with their Orange colours! And oh, what a day for me was the glorious first of July, when with my whole body covered with Orange ribbons I fiddles 'Croppies Lie Down,' 'Boyne Water' and the 'Protestant Boys' before the procession which walked around Willie's figure on horseback in College Green, the man and horse all ablaze with Orange colours! But nothing lasts under the sun, as your hanner knows; Orangism began to go down; the Government scowled at it and at last passed a law preventing the Protestant boys' dressing up the figure on the first of July and walking round it. That was the death-blow of the Orange party, your han-

ner; they never recovered it, but began to despond and dwindle, and I with them, for there was scarcely any demand for Orange tunes. Then Dan O'Connell arose with his emancipation and repale cries, and then instead of Orange processions and walkings, there were papist processions and mobs, which made me afraid to stir out, lest, knowing me for an Orange fiddler, they should break my head, as the boys broke my leg at Donnybrook fair. At length some of the repalers and emancipators, knowing I was a first-rate hand at fiddling, came to me and told me that if I would give over playing 'Croppies Lie Down' and other Orange tunes, and would play 'Croppies Get Up' and what not, and become a Catholic and a repaler, and an emancipator, they would make a man of me — so as my Orange trade was gone, and I was half starved, I consented, not however till they had introduced me to Daniel O'Connell, who called me a credit to my country, and the Irish Horpheus, and promised me a sovereign if I would consent to join the cause, as he called it. Well, your hanner, I joined with the cause and became a papist, I mane a Catholic once more, and went at the head of processions, covered all over with green ribbons, playing 'Croppies Get Up,' 'Granny Whale,' and the like. But, your hanner, though I went the whole hog with the repalers and emancipators, they did not make their words good by making a man of me. Scant and sparing were they in the mate and drink, and yet more sparing in

the money, and Daniel O'Connell never gave me the sovereign which he promised me. No, your hanner, though I played 'Croppies Get Up' till my fingers ached, as I stumped before him and his mobs and processions, he never gave me the sovereign, unlike your hanner, who gave me the shilling for playing 'Croppies Lie Down,' Daniel O'Connell never gave me the sovereign he promised me for playing 'Croppies Get Up.' Och, your hanner, I often wished the ould Orange days were back again. However, as I could do no better I continued going the whole hog with the emancipators and repalers and Dan O'Connell; I went the whole animal with them till they got emancipation; and I went the whole animal with them till they nearly got repale — when all of a sudden they let the whole thing drop — Dan and his party having frighted the Government out of its seven senses, and gotten all they could get, in money and places, which was all they wanted, let the whole hullabaloo drop, and of course myself, who formed part of it. I went to those who had persuaded me to give up my Orange tunes, and to play papist ones, begging them to give me work; but they told me civilly that they had no farther occasion for my services. I went to Daniel O'Connell, reminding him of the sovereign he had promised me, and offering if he gave it me to play 'Croppies Get Up' under the nose of the lord-lieutenant himself; but he told me that he had not time to attend to me, and when I persisted, bade me go to the

Divil and shake myself in my own country, and having incurred some little debts, for which I feared to be arrested, I came over to England and Wales, where with little content and satisfaction I have passed seven years."

"Well," said Borrow, "thank you for your history — farewell." The old fiddler went his way; but for a long time George stood still . . . thinking . . . thinking. . . .

He had got an impression of Wales that would not change; but that was not what troubled him. There was the old priest in Spain; but that had been many years ago. He had been sincere; but the lame fiddler had not been sincere. Had George been too harsh, too rude? He hated to think it; and for once he *must* be sincere. In 1862, when he had made his peace with Murray once again, *Wild Wales* was published.

This book was very different from anything he had previously written. It was a quiet, peaceful book; it was a colourless book; but it was true. George had satisfied his conscience, and he was done for as a literary man . . . but he would not know it. He had yet to sing his swan-song.

Back in 1840 Lavengro was the only living Anglo-Saxon with any serious claim to an understanding of the gipsies and their vocabulary. He was a pioneer: he had cut out a field for himself, but after exhausting that field as it transiently was he deserted

it, expecting it to remain as he knew it. It was his misfortune that it did not.

After Borrow had got after the gipsies, the thing became a sort of fashion. Men with some academic background and a desire for adventure got after them also, and ground that George had traversed was covered again in somewhat more thorough fashion. Words that he had studied only for their temporary usefulness were noted by others, grammatically trained, and whipped up into the form of a living, inflected, and serviceable language. True scholars became gipsies for the nonce and emerged from their experience with unneglected opportunities.

Don Jorge congratulated himself that he had not missed any chances. He had benefited by his work with the Bible Society, and he had tried to benefit by his friendship with Jasper Petulengro. *Targum* had got no one in a sweat save himself, but his word-book of the Romany surely would.

So he went to work and plugged like the very devil, and in 1874 Murray published the *Romano Lavo-lil*. Here at last was Borrow's thrust for fame.

Poor George. The vocabulary as it was published had existed in manuscript for many years. He had extended it with songs and notes, but the words themselves were what his hopes depended on.

Alas! the reviewers had forgotten that Borrow was alive. But they were not displeased when the "word-book" appeared, for they were convinced

that Borrow had earned the right to assert himself once more. The dictionary was tucked under their several arms and carried home to be studied so that it might be done justice.

It was done justice. C. G. Leland (Hans Breitmann) had anticipated Lavengro with a gipsy vocabulary, and from every point of view Leland's book was the better of the two. It was up-to-the-minute and accurate, and surely better done. Borrow was very nearly a laughing-stock.

Yet there was balm and salve and kudos.

F. H. Groome discovered the songs and notes of the *Romano Lavo-lil,* and the other faults of the book were glossed over, so that George was not entirely let down.

He made a face at Jehovah and went home to bed.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THERE WAS ALMOST NO LIVING with George in these halcyon days, after the return from Wales with Mary and Henrietta. He was no more a roamer, but a chronic stay-at-home. It was almost impossible to get him out of the house. They had begun to call him the Old Fogy of Oulton Hall.

He wasn't a fogy, he knew quite well that that was one sure thing; but somehow or other he had got the idea that there was no one to compare with him in the whole wide world. He would still think so after the publication of the gipsy word-book, but that was still in the offing.

He had had his disappointments, and he had certainly not forgotten them, but, just the same, he was the one and only George Borrow, and when you said that, it was the same as saying "God Almighty," which was the same as shattering the decalogue, which was the same as taking the name of Borrow in vain. He was the one and only George Borrow — but his name was Lavengro.

He was touchy on this subject. He knew more languages than any other man had ever known . . . and he knew them better than any other man would ever know them. (Damn Bowring.) He had been in partnership with the Lord of hosts, which was something that no mortal save himself could claim. He forgot, among others, Moses.

Lavengro, after dropping out of the great world and coming to live with Mary at Oulton Hall, felt very strong from the royalties that derived from his books. His wife held not all of the purse-strings; and he decided to let piety go by the board and cut loose on a spree. He stopped going to church. He did not have to go to church, and not all the powers of heaven could make him go.

Mrs. Borrow smiled, but not indulgently. She was not herself a moralist; she had in the *ménage* in Spain violated a tenet of her own creed, but she was a Christian, and George had committed blasphemy. She had married him thinking him a Christian also, and now he was living in sin.

She questioned her husband, but he was reticent. He was pleased to cause his wife some anxiety, to have her know that he did not fear God, to show her that he was a gipsy.

A Miss Cobbe, who had known Lavengro in his Norwich days, in writing to a friend about the Oulton period of George's life, said of him: ". . . He talked all about the Fathers . . . arguing that their

quotations went to prove that it was *not* our gospels they had in their hands. I knew most of it before, but it was admirably done. I talked a little theology to him in a serious way (finding him talk of his 'horrors') and he abounded in my sense of the non-existence of Hell, and of the presence and action of the soul of *a* Spirit, rewarding and punishing. He would not say 'God'; but repeated over and over again that he spoke not from books but from his own personal experience."

He was endeavouring to prove to himself — and to his wife — that he was a true autocrat. Mrs. Borrow had long before copied *The Zincali* for the printer, and afterwards Borrow had remarked that the manuscript " was written by a country amanuensis and probably contains many ridiculous errata. . . ." So that the graces were not his; but even had he chosen them, he had not possessed them. His was not a graceful nature, neither was it grateful; but it was his own, and it was not to be changed.

Finally George tired of his pettishness, and Mrs. Borrow smiled indulgently. She wrote to George's mother, herself not long for this life: " He is very regular in his morning and evening devotions, so that we all have abundant cause for thankfulness." Poor lady.

In 1869 Mary Skepper Borrow died, and George was left alone, an old man. He opened Oulton Hall to the gipsies, who seldom visited him. And when they

did, they were not gipsies like Jasper Petulengro and Tawno Chikno . . . or maybe Lavengro did not feel as he had once felt about them. They seemed different, somehow — but he liked them to come, and they, turned aristocratic, preferred to stay away.

George was lonely; he was a recluse not of his own making. Nobody cared about him. He had broken with God; his alliance with Satan was all that he had left, and Satan was concerned with other, younger, more malleable material. . . .

And we have seen George, not as a vagabond, but as an associate of vagabonds. His adventures with them were so only in that he had personal contact with adventurers.

He founded a school of literature, derived from Cervantes on the one hand and Defoe on the other, which has had a few active followers: scriveners; and a great many passive followers: readers. This school deals with the glorification of the vagabond, who is usually a rogue and a despicable fellow, just as Jasper Petulengro was a rogue and a despicable fellow, and just as George Borrow was a liar by the clock. He capitalized his adventures, most of which did not happen to him at all — and those that did not happen have found no place in this book — so that he might live as he did live: in the moment. Yet, though his soul was Satan's and long in hell, that Borrow bequeathed anything to posterity was not an accident. He had the stuff in him of which men and books are made.

George understood that literatures are not builded of statistics. He had a horror of pure facts, and even his reports to the Bible Society were, if nothing else, readable. It so happened, then, that when, as in *Lavengro* and *The Bible in Spain*, a fact stood in patent conflict with the narrative, he altered the fact rather than the narrative. Would that all literary sins were comparable with this!

And George, while he was superbly civilized intrinsically, had never become civilized as other men had. Neither precept nor example had altered him. He could not get away from his forbears. His father's ancestors from Cornwall, his mother's ancestors from France, these were civilized people in that they were neither savages nor barbarians. But they lacked the polish, the veneer, the *sophistication* of men like — just for instance — Sir John Bowring. And it burned George up when he thought about it, as he seldom did. There were too many other questions, none of which he ever answered satisfactorily to himself. He hated Catholicism; he mocked Protestantism; but the Divine Intelligence remained.

In 1881 old George died, full of years, bereft of honours. A small clique mourned him; the rest of the world did not know that he had ever lived.

APPENDIX

BORROW'S WORKS

IN ORDER OF PUBLICATION

From this list are omitted the "Life and Adventures of Joseph Sell, the Great Traveller"; a translation of Vidocq's *Memoirs,* variously attributed to Borrow; all magazine articles by Lavengro; and such works as he edited or translated for the British and Foreign Bible Society.

1. *Celebrated Trials, and Remarkable Cases of Criminal Jurisprudence from the Earliest Records to the Year 1825.* Six volumes. London, 1825.
2. *Faustus: His Life, Death, and Descent into Hell* (from the German of von Klinger). W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, London, 1825.
3. *Romantic Ballads.* S. Wilkin, Norwich, 1826.
4. *Targum: or, Metrical Translations from Thirty Languages and Dialects.* St. Petersburg, 1835.
5. *The Talisman* (from the Russian of Pushkin). St. Petersburg, 1835.
6. *The Zincali; or, An Account of the Gypsies of*

Spain. Two volumes. John Murray, London, 1841.

7. *The Bible in Spain; or, the Journeys, Adventures, and Imprisonments of an Englishman in an Attempt to Circulate the Scriptures in the Peninsula.* Three volumes. John Murray, London, 1842.
8. *Lavengro: The Scholar — The Gypsy — The Priest.* Three volumes. John Murray, London, 1851.
9. *The Romany Rye:* a Sequel to *Lavengro.* Two volumes. John Murray, London, 1857.
10. *The Sleeping Bard; or, Visions of the World, Death, and Hell* (from the Cambrian British of Elis Wyn). John Murray, London, 1860.[1]
11. *Wild Wales: Its People, Language, and Scenery.* Three volumes. John Murray, London, 1862.
12. *Romano Lavo-lil: Word-book of the Romany; or, English Gypsy Language.* John Murray, London, 1874.
13. *The Turkish Jester; or, the Pleasantries of Cogia Nasr Eddin Effendi* (from the Turkish). W. Webber, Ipswich, 1884.
14. *The Death of Balder* (from the Danish of Evald). Jarrold & Sons, Norwich, 1892.

[1] John Murray did not really publish *The Sleeping Bard;* he merely, out of courtesy to Borrow, permitted his name to appear as publisher on the title-page.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

DR. KNAPP'S voluminous and exhaustive work *The Life, Writings and Correspondence of George Borrow* (John Murray, London, 1899) is indispensable to any commentator on Borrow and his work. Dr. Knapp's book is manifestly a labour of love, and consequently portions of it (infrequent and forgivable) are unreasonably distorted, as where, in recording the untrue episode of " Joseph Sell," he maintains that Borrow never referred to " Joseph Sell " as a book at all, when, as Herbert Jenkins has pointed out in his own book, Lavengro spoke of the mysterious Sell as a book four times in nine lines. But in the main Dr. Knapp is dependable, and certainly his work is more comprehensive than anything else written on Borrow before or since.

Herbert Jenkins's *The Life of George Borrow* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1912–24) is unquestionably a valuable book, and quite readable; but it derives principally from Knapp, notwithstanding its large amount of original — and unimportant, save

for its interest to the Borrovian scholar, who still, praise God, is among us — matter. Mr. Jenkins waded through the archives of the Bible Society, which would seem to be a thankless task, and came out with a full net. He is prone to discount Borrow's actual strength of character for the sake of an anecdote which should be exciting, but fails to be even dramatic when bolstered up by endless — hardly superfluous — foot-notes; yet Herbert Jenkins succeeded in clearing up beyond hope of cavil the Graydon episodes, and this alone is a great accomplishment.

George Borrow: The Man and His Work, by R. A. J. Walling (Cassel & Co., London, 1908), is, it would seem, intentionally diffuse. The book is not at all straightforward: the author is a literary critic in one paragraph and a biographer in the next, and a hero-worshipper from beginning to end. But his indebtedness to Knapp, while acknowledged, is not clear, inasmuch as Walling claims to have found qualities in Borrow never previously observed. Right enough, the qualities are there; but as Mr. Walling makes no mention of them, a final judgment were better suspended.

The title of Clement Shorter's *George Borrow and His Circle* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1913) is unfortunate. Borrow properly had no circle: the active period of his life was spent in many places among many people; and had there been a circle, Don Jorge had either dominated it or departed it for ever.

No doubt Mr. Shorter, in choosing his title, appreciated this, for it must have been plain to him — as it is to everybody else — that he had done something new — and good — in the way of a book on George Borrow; and of course he wanted and deserved something new in the way of a title.

Among straight biographies a little book of some fifty pages, James Hopper's *Souvenir of the George Borrow Celebration, Norwich, July 5th, 1913* (Jarrold & Sons, London and Norwich, 1913) is the most satisfactory. Hopper has employed only facts without commentary, and yet permitted himself to admire George Borrow in his every word. This book was published for the Committee of the Celebration, with no intention of achieving popularity — and indeed no possibility of it since the circulation was limited — but it has delighted the few people not already Borrovians into whose hands it has fallen.

The magazine and occasional Borroviana are immense. The old *Athenæum*, the *Eastern Daily Press*, and *Good Words* have all in their time devoted much space to writings about Borrow; Theodore Watts-Dunton's article on Borrow in the *Encyclopædia Brittanica* is a treasure-hoard because of the author's personal recollections of old Lavengro; and even the dry-as-dust records of the British and Foreign Bible Society are infrequently enlivened by an anecdote about Don Jorge and his good friend Graydon.

But a dozen intermittent pages — pointed out

to me by my father, whose interest in Borrow fostered mine — in a probably forgotten book (although its author had no bias in those days) gives the most clear-cut verbal picture of George Borrow I have ever read in so short a space. The book is *Through the Magic Door* (The McClure Co., New York, 1908), by Arthur Conan Doyle. Pages 100 to 106 of this book must not be lost; neither must other pages stray in " Through the Magic Door."

And yet each of the writings I have mentioned portrays a different Borrow, and none of them is the Borrow who conversed with Murtagh, and Petulengro, and the Gambler, and Belle Berners, and the Man in Black, as recorded in *Lavengro;* who remembered a hardly coherent gipsy's account of a later Pharaoh's defiance of the Lord of hosts, as recorded in *The Zincali;* who drew out the whole philosophy of the old priest of Córdoba, as recorded in *The Bible in Spain;* and who listened to Janus masquerading as a lame fiddler, as recorded in the pages of *Wild Wales.* For the man who recorded these things was the man who lived them, and the man who lived them was George Borrow. He was a man; but he was not simply a vagabond, or a linguist, or even God's henchman. But he was all of these.

So in writing my *George Borrow* I have been influenced mainly, not by what Knapp, and Jenkins, and Doyle, and Watts-Dunton have said, but by what Borrow himself has said. Thus, properly, the method

I have used is not my method at all: only diligence and attention have been required of me. Because finding Borrow's influence was a hard job: George wrote so much. . . .

But from that much I have abstracted a little; and I believe that little to be a picture, unembellished, in true perspective.

A NOTE ON THE TYPE IN WHICH THIS BOOK IS SET

This book is set on the Linotype in Garamont, a modern rendering of the type first cut in the sixteenth century by Claude Garamond (1510–1561). He was a pupil of Geofroy Tory and is believed to have based his letters on the Venetian models although he introduced a number of important differences, and it is to him we owe the letter which we know as Old Style. He gave to his letters a certain elegance and a feeling of movement which won for their creator an immediate reputation and the patronage of the French King, Francis I.

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